THE BIBLE THROUGH THE CENTURIES

HERBERT L. WILLETT

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THE BIBLE THROUGH THE CENTURIES

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By HERBERT L. WILLETT

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THE BIBLE THROUGH
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A WORD WITH THE READER

This is not intended as an introduction or a preface or even a foreword. Each of these might be interesting, but the purpose here is a confidential talk with those who are to read this book as to its nature and purpose. No one will ever be able to speak the final word regarding the Bible, but any contribution to the increase of knowledge regarding it is worth while. From any point of view there is profit and enjoyment in the reading and study of this great collection of writings. To make the most of such opportunities as one possesses is an enterprise of vital importance.

The Bible is easily one of the great books of the world. Probably no one would dispute that statement. Every church in Christendom uses the Bible as its sacred book, the basis of its teaching, and the inspiration for its message. The Bible is found in great numbers of homes, perhaps not as universally as once when other books were rarer, but at least it is probable that the majority of homes in the lands where Christianity prevails have copies of the Scriptures. It is an interesting fact that an organization of Christian traveling men has undertaken to provide a Bible for every hotel room in America. The Bible is the most widely circulated book in the world. The presses of the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society never stop. In every land there are depots for its distribu-

tion in all the languages used by the native populations. Every library that is competently organized has copies of the Bible. Because of these facts and many others that might be cited regarding the wide distribution of the Scriptures, they are regarded by the Christian world as the most significant and sacred volume in existence.

To be sure, the Bible is not the only sacred book in the world. There are few religions among the many that have flourished through all history and are now widely scattered over the continents that do not possess something in the way of a sacred literature. It is inevitable that this should be the case. The founders and early teachers of any faith are likely to leave some writings, or at least to inspire their followers and interpreters to write out some of the things they have said. These books become classic and authoritative with the confessors of such religions. They may even claim divine inspiration for their utterances, as is the case with several of them. So the Bible takes its place along with a number of other works of religious character. Its relation to these other bibles can only be determined upon an examination of the contents of all and an effort to understand in what degree one outranks another.

It seems wise to start our consideration of the Bible with no assumption as to its superiority, but with an earnest desire to know what it is, how it came to be, what claims it makes for itself, and what its influence has been upon the people who have used it. Probably most of those who regard the Bible as a holy book would be unsatisfied with its assignment to the general collection of religious literature. Many would demand that it be given at once the supreme

place among religious writings, outranking all others. Perhaps they might even insist that the consideration of any other books as sacred in comparison with the Bible is an act of irreverence.

It is thought, however, that the best method of determining the place and value of the Bible among the sacred books of the world is to be discovered not upon any preconceived grounds but rather in view of the facts which the Bible itself sets forth and the results of its study through the centuries.

The Bible is not a perfect book. The fact that it is the product of human hands and human minds would be sufficient reason for such a conclusion. It presents frankly the beliefs of the men who composed it and of their contemporaries. It is not a textbook on history, not even upon the history of the small nation of the Hebrews with which it deals, though it is the most important source for the study of that history. Nor does it present a complete picture of the early Christian communities. Yet, of course, it is chiefly concerned with the Hebrew religion and the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is not final in its morality. It reveals in its earlier sections conditions which have long since been passed in the growth of ethical and religious ideals. Usually it presents these low conditions of human society without comment or criticism. It leaves its readers to draw their own conclusions regarding the conditions it describes. Its religious teachings are not compact and definitive. They are rather diverse and progressive. The Bible pictures the progress of human life under the leadership of moral and spiritual teachers from very low begin-

nings up to the supreme standards set forth by the Man of Nazareth.

Why then is the Bible so important a document in the history of culture and worship? What is the justification of those who call it the world's supreme book on morals and religion? Several reasons may be given:

It is the classic of the western world of Christendom. It contains the surviving records of a remarkable people, the Hebrews, and of a small and early portion of the most significant movement in history, the Christian society. It presents some of the outstanding personalities of the ages — prophets, teachers, apostles — and particularly one, the central figure in the religious life of the world, Jesus Christ. It gives the two most impressive chapters in the history of religion, the Old Testament and the New Testament. It contains some of the most attractive writings in all literature, though it lays no claim to literary excellence. There are no more beautiful passages in any literature than some to be found in the Scriptures. The book of Job is a masterpiece among the great poems of the world. Many of the Psalms are lyrics of exquisite charm. The prophetic books contain sections of majesty and impressiveness unsurpassed by any other writings.

It is worth much to know something of this book and the setting in which it took form, as well as the process of its growth.

The Bible has been surrounded and overladen with many traditions and superstitions. No book has suffered more from misuse by its friends and its enemies. Perhaps the best means of freeing it from these entanglements is

to attempt to answer some of the plain questions which arise in the mind of any intelligent person regarding it.

The present volume is not an elaborate treatise upon the Bible. The literature which is available upon this subject is abundant and adequate. Perhaps that very abundance has proved something of a barrier to a satisfactory knowledge of its nature and contents by the average reader. Where so much is said, there is danger that too little is appropriated. But some competent knowledge of the Bible is essential to even an average education. In the various translations we have, the book is a classic of English literature. It is the foundation of law and custom among Christian nations. It teaches the great facts and principles of the Christian faith. It has exerted a profound influence through all the centuries since its beginnings. No intelligent person can be insensitive to such a book or indifferent to its claims upon his regard.

But particularly is the Bible interesting in this generation because of the new light thrown upon its pages from many angles. The new sciences of archaeology, exploration, excavation, comparative history and religion have revealed a new world of interest in which the Bible has a conspicuous place. The soil of the lands of the Bible is being turned over in a successful search for evidence regarding the centuries in which the book was produced. The geography of biblical lands is a modern and stimulating study. The political conditions of the nations about ancient Israel and of the Roman empire throw fresh light upon Old and New Testament times. Historical names mentioned in the Bible, that once sounded remote and half mythical, have moved

into the light as knowledge of the Orient has increased. They have become familiar and authentic.

Everyone knows something about the Bible. But there are multitudes who have no satisfactory knowledge of its nature and purpose. People are asking many questions regarding it, questions which can be answered easily with a moderate amount of study of its contents. Among such questions are these: Who wrote it? When was it written? In what language was it written? For what people was it written? How did the process of its composition begin? How has it come down the centuries to us? Those who are trying to find out something more adequate regarding it are an increasing number. A new generation comes on that knows little about the beliefs and traditions of former times and must be given an opportunity to understand the Bible in the language and with the methods best suited to this age. Alike to those to whom the Bible is the most precious of possessions and those who have but a vague and wistful attitude toward it, it is of importance that the main facts regarding it should be set forth simply and in accessible form.

Probably most people have a feeling that they would like to know more about this remarkable book which has had such a place in the history of civilization and of religion. The present volume is designed to assist the reader in gaining such a knowledge of the background and nature of the Bible as shall answer the outstanding questions which suggest themselves regarding it.

I

THE WORLD BEFORE THE BIBLE

It is natural that people should think of the Bible as a very old book, if not the oldest in the world. The reasons for this are many. It has a venerable place in western civilization, that area of the world which we know in general as Christendom. It is revered in all the churches as the authentic word of God, and those who are accustomed to worship or who have any contact with the church are likely to regard it with a measure of reverence which is closely associated with the thought of antiquity. More than this, from time to time one sees in the libraries and museums old copies of the Bible with dates going back to the early stages of the art of printing. There are many versions of the Bible in the English language which possess this quality of age and leave the impression of a long history. Beyond this fact, most informed people know that the Bible was not written in English, but in older languages, the Hebrew and the Greek. Its two main divisions, the Old Testament and the New, were composed in these tongues. Any such association with ancient languages produces the impression of a remote origin, and the entire literary history of the Bible, through various ancient versions, adds to this impression of antiquity. It is not strange, therefore, that the Bible should seem to most people to be a very ancient document.

That idea is still further suggested by the fact that until recent times the entire history of the world was thought to cover only a few thousand years at the most. In the days when the origin of the world was placed by the accepted chronology about six thousand years in the past, it was easy to conceive of the Bible as covering most of those early centuries of human history. The world was very small in the days of our ancestors. Not very much was known regarding the far lands of the Orient. Most of the popular knowledge possessed came from the Bible, with its limitation of view to the regions lying immediately east of the Mediterranean Sea. In fact, until the days of Columbus and the discovery of America the Mediterranean was the central basin of history, and most of the currents of human life passed around and across it. The people who wrote the Bible lived in that region and thought in terms of a relatively small world whose duration had only covered three or four thousand years.

So far as the New Testament is concerned, its composition lay much nearer to our own time. It is less than two thousand years old. In comparison with it, the Old Testament seems to run back into dim antiquity and at first thought it appears to date almost from primeval time.

In reality, however, the place of the Bible in the total history of civilization is comparatively recent. As historical and archaeological inquiries push back the limits of human life upon this planet into periods five or six thousand years before the Christian era, and all subsequent history measures but a few centuries at most, it is easy to see that the place

of the Bible in the total story of literature is really quite late and modern. It is plain that in comparison with the long stretches of partly recorded history that preceded it, and of that incalculable and unrecorded period when humanity was emerging from the earlier stages of life, we have in these documents a rather modern collection. Something of the ancient feeling of the Bible is no doubt due to the fact that it undertook to supply the missing links between the beginnings of humanity and the origins of the Hebrew nation. Those early chapters of Genesis that make this effort succeed admirably in producing the impression of an actual recital of primeval events, and thus they bring down to the very threshold of Hebrew national life the story of creation and the beginnings of human culture. This fact gives to the book of Genesis an undoubted value which the more formal records, such as archaeology and history afford, could not offer.

The real story of the Bible covers about sixteen hundred years, from the fifteenth century before Christ down to the end of the first hundred years of the Christian era. The emigrations of Semitic clans from their Babylonian home; the settlements in Canaan, and the expansion into Egypt and the desert; later the return of Egyptian groups with some of their desert adherents; the gradual occupation of Palestine; the slow development of Hebrew culture through the brief period of national unity under David and Solomon, followed by the division into the northern and southern kingdoms in 937 B.C.; the overthrow of the northern tribes by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. and their disappearance from

history; the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians; the departure of expatriated and refugee Hebrews into Babylonia, Egypt and other portions of the east; the gradual return of some from the lands of dispersion; the long and painful process of Jerusalem's revival under many adverse conditions; the rise of Judaism; the life of the Jews under Syrian and Roman government; and the beginnings of the Christian movement in the first century A.D., all occupy a comparatively brief chapter in the long story of the centuries.

Short as was this experience of the rise and fall of Israel and the origins of the Christian enterprise, its literary records cover an even briefer length of time. Probably the oldest writings of the Old Testament date from a period as late as the ninth century B.C. A few survivals from the writings of these and later years have come to us in that collection, which is all we have of the literature of Israel during the time when Hebrew was an actually spoken language. Considerable additions to this body of documents we possess in the later Greek writings of the apocryphal list and in the New Testament. But as compared with the total literary product of Israel's social, commercial and religious life, the Old Testament is very small. There are in it frequent references to other books that have not survived. It is possible that research may bring to light some of these hitherto lost records, but at present the supply is limited to a group little larger than the actual biblical dimensions.

One must compare this small body of literature and the limited group of people who produced it with the

world of the ages out of which it came. Of that world the Hebrews knew very little. Their immediate contacts were with the related Semitic nations of the fertile crescent, that rainbow-shaped area running northeastward from the Egyptian delta, along the east coast of the Mediterranean, up into the regions where the Euphrates has its sources, and downward again along this river to the seats of ancient civilization near the Persian Gulf. Of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria, as well as the clans nearer at hand, like the Syrians, Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, Philistines and Phoenicians, the Hebrews knew from their contacts, either friendly or hostile. But when they attempted to think of a wider world, it was mostly dim and undefined. In accordance with their Semitic beliefs, that world was a flat disk resting on the eternal waters, surrounded and covered by a bowl-shaped firmament, the place of the stars. Jerusalem was thought of as the center of this area and the home of Jahveh, its covenant deity. Did rumors ever come to these Hebrews of lands still more remote? Just across the Mediterranean lay the growing civilizations of Greece, Rome and the more western parts of Europe. Of those regions almost nothing was known to the writers of the Old Testament. Some word, to be sure, must have come to them regarding the people of Crete and the tragedy that befell them, and of the Greek colonies on the coasts and islands of the Ægean, but it was only in later days, and especially in New Testament times, that these lands became measurably familiar. Did they know anything of the great regions farther east like India and China? There is no hint that they did, and yet these lands were busy with the tasks of commerce and re-

ligion.* Perhaps travelers now and then came from such remote districts, just as we know Chinese mandarins traded with Roman centurians on the shores of the Mediterranean; but such knowledge was all very dim and remote. How much less could these Hebrews of the classic age have imagined new worlds out beyond the Pillars of Hercules, which only later centuries were to discover.

And yet the people of the Bible lands were surrounded, even though at a distance, by civilizations far older than their own. When the Hebrew emigrants came from Babylonia, they left cities, temples, universities, venerable and wealthy. In spite of the measure of culture reached by the earlier inhabitants of Palestine, it was like emigrating to a new and less civilized world. Traders who made their way into Egypt found themselves in the midst of a mighty country with great cities and marvelous temples. Palestine to all such travelers out into the regions beyond must have seemed a very small and unimportant land. And we know today of those other regions in the far Orient whose civilizations were equally venerable and whose religions had long been the creeds of vast populations.

The Bible is therefore by no means the oldest of human records. Priests and prophets, sages and poets had been busy in other and far distant lands long before the rise of Hebrew life. It is only as one becomes aware of this fact that the

* The former view that "the land of Sinim" mentioned in Isa. 49:12 is China is no longer held by scholars. The reference is probably to a region S. E. of Palestine, or to Seyene, (Assuan,) on the Nile. The expeditions of the ships of Solomon and Hiram to the Indian coast for the commodities of that region seem to have brought to Palestine no adequate information regarding that further portion of the Orient.

proper place of the Bible in civilization and world literature can be appreciated. It took form far west of the center of the world's early culture. Its people knew just the limited region of the Mediterranean, the fertile crescent and the desert. The rivers of its geography were the Tigris and Euphrates, the Nile and the little Jordan. Paradise, the primitive home of the race, was located in their traditions somewhere in that Mesopotamian home from which their ancestors had come. Of the cities of that outlying world they had heard with alarm and disapproval. Tyre, Sidon, Memphis, Thebes, Babylon, Nineveh, were all the symbols of wealth and wickedness. In comparison with the limitations of Palestine and the provincialism of Jerusalem and Samaria, the world outside was only known to be reprobated and feared.

Long before the days of the Bible, Babylonian civilization had erected its temples, ordained its priesthood, and written its sacred books in honor of its gods and goddesses and as the record of magical formulae warding off danger or bringing prosperity. This great system of religion was in full progress during the years when Israel was a small nation among the highlands of Palestine, and those Hebrews who, as travelers or exiles, came to know something of the magnificence of Babylonian institutions, felt themselves members of a rather insignificant people in comparison with the great empire of the east.

Assyria had a culture and religion derived in large measure from Babylonia, and like it in its leading characteristics. Its pantheon of gods had grown up as a collection of more or less local divinities gathered at last under the

leadership of the supreme god of Nineveh, Asshur. Of religion there was abundance of its kind among the Assyrians in the days when Isaiah was preaching in the streets of Jerusalem. Hittite cities of wealth and power flourished in the eastern areas of Asia Minor, and contended with Egypt for the sovereignty of the Mediterranean coastlands.

Greece had a culture and history as old as the beginnings of Hebrew life. The event back to which classic Greek poetry went for its inspiration was the Trojan war, at least a thousand years before the Christian era. The gods of Greece were notable creations of philosophic and poetic thought, and were believed to reside in the divine habitations of Olympus, the sacred mountain of the north. The high period of Greek life and religion was reached in the fifth century B.C., the times when Jerusalem was passing through the bitter experiences of siege and destruction and its people were dispersed into other lands.

Rome, whose traditions made the year 753 B.C. the date of its foundations, was growing into power in the years when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were rising to their zenith and declining to their ruin. The religion of Rome was largely borrowed from Greece and was the type of pagan belief and practice which forms the background of the New Testament.

In India, the Vedas were the classic hymns of the faith of Hinduism from early times. Probably in the very years when Israel was first penetrating the highlands of Palestine, the Vedic civilization was beginning to spread through the Indian peninsula, and from that time until the days of the

Buddha in the fifth century B.C., was the prevailing faith of that race.

In the same great century Confucius, the sage of China, sent forth his messages regarding the moral duties of mankind in the five chief relations. No teacher has ever exerted a more profound and widespread influence upon mankind than this revered moralist.

Somewhere in the same general period stands Zoroaster, the prophet of the Persian race, one of the first interpreters of a belief approaching monotheism.

It is thus seen that the world before the Bible and the world in which the Bible had its beginnings was already occupied by many varieties of religious belief and social custom. It was not a religionless world in which the prophets of Israel arose to proclaim their messages.

In the midst of this complex of civilizations, institutions and religions, the people of the Bible had their modest place. That place is modern rather than ancient. The New Testament is a recent document. The Christianity of which it speaks is a late arrival in history, and the Hebrew civilization that lies back of it comes right up to the threshold of modern days. By all odds the greater portion of human events, though not those of major importance, lie in the period before the days of the Bible, and the task of the historian and archaeologist is to recover as much as is possible of that ancient and largely unrecorded past. Against this background of experience, custom and belief, the Bible has a unique and commanding position.

II

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BIBLE

In thinking of almost any book, one naturally pictures an author sitting down to the task of its preparation with a general plan of its structure, length and purpose. Such an idea cannot be associated with the Bible. No one person conceived the design of such a book, or set himself to the work of writing it. It is rather a collection of documents of many sorts and sizes. Some of them are fairly long, appear to have a single author, and may well be called books by their own right. Such is Job or the Gospel of John. Others are compilations of earlier material, gathered from various sources, and wrought into unity by the hands of later authors or editors. Such are Genesis, Samuel, Kings and Isaiah. Still others are brief tracts or pamphlets, like Esther, Ecclesiastes or the Epistles. They were not prepared as parts of a collection, much less as chapters of a single book. The men who wrote them had no thought that they were contributing to a volume that was to take its place among the religious classics of the world. They had a much more limited and immediate purpose, which can usually be discovered by the reader.

The word Bible itself is a late and derived name. It came from the town of Byblos on the Syrian coast from which quantities of papyrus were brought to the Greek

cities of the west for the use of writers in the making of rolls or books. These rolls acquired the name "biblia," or books, from association with the town from which they came, much as "china" or porcelain took its name from the country where it was first made. The extensive copying and circulation of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures tended to connect the word "biblia," or rolls, with that collection of documents, and so it gave the name Bible to the whole.

The terms Old Testament and New Testament, as designations of the Hebrew and Christian portions of the Bible, were not known to their writers or early readers. They were employed by the church fathers of the third and later centuries as convenient names for the two parts of the Scriptures that had the values of successive covenants, wills or testaments, an earlier and a later one. The Jews and early Christians spoke of their sacred writings, the Hebrew books, as the Scriptures, and Jesus and his friends called them by that name. The Christian writings grew up around the life and teachings of the Founder, and were freely referred to as the Gospels, the Epistles, and the like, or merely as the Gospel.

The books now included in the Bible are but a small part of the total mass of writings produced by the Hebrew people and the early Christians. The literature put forth by any large group such as a nation or the adherents of a particular religion is likely to be sizable and varied. Such was the case among the people from whom the Bible came. But its interests are chiefly religious, and writings primarily devoted to other themes were not likely to be included. No doubt most of them perished. We know this from refer-

ences in the biblical books to related writings which no longer exist.

The beginnings of the Bible date much further back than even the earliest of its documents. Religion is older than writing. Men worshiped long before the art of writing was known. And long after they could write, the ritual of the primitive sanctuaries was doubtless passed on orally from one generation to another without thought of writing it down. Men speak long before they write. In the times when biblical materials first began to take form it was easier to remember than to write. Stories, parables, proverbs and poems were handed on from father to son and from teacher to scholar. It is thought that the Homeric poems, the classics of ancient Greece, were not written out at the time of their composition, but were carried in mind with slight changes for centuries. Writing is old as an achievement, but late as a necessity and diversion. In antiquity few men knew the art, and the work was costly and laborious. Even for those who possessed the knowledge essential, the materials of writing were difficult to obtain. Stones, clay tablets, parchment, papyrus, and paper have been the successive steps in the world's literary history, and each step marks a long advance in the command of the means of writing.

Older and contemporary nations had reached a high degree of proficiency in the use of writing by the time the Hebrews began their national career. The Egyptian monuments preserve the annals of kings and the hymns of poets, and Babylonian obelisks, cylinders, and letters record the expansion of the cultural influence of that civilization. But the Hebrew survivals are few, either because the literary im-

pulse was feebler, or because the records have perished. With few exceptions, such as archaeological research is bringing to light, the Old Testament is the sole surviving literature from the classic age of Hebrew life.*

Yet it seems probable that long before any portions of the Old Testament were written down as we have them today, there were many sayings, proverbs, maxims and oracles that floated about in the common speech of the people, and passed as current coin in the give-and-take of conversation. The Orient has always been fond of wise, witty or quaint sayings in which the wisdom of the past is stored. Long before the book of Proverbs was produced there were many such floating bits of humor and sage counsel as the oldest biblical sources, like the books of Judges and Samuel, bear witness. Examples are numerous. When the two Midianite chiefs were brought to bay by Gideon, they

* Examples of writing are mentioned in fairly early Hebrew times. A youth captured by Gideon wrote down for him the names of the princes and elders of his town (Judg. 8:14); David wrote a letter to Joab (2 Sam. 11:14); Jezebel wrote letters to the elders and nobles of Jezreel (1 Kings 21:8). The Siloam inscription is evidence that Hebrew workmen in the age of Hezekiah could record an incident in their cutting of the water course. It has often been supposed that there was some special degree of sanctity in the Hebrew language, because the books of the Old Testament were written in that tongue. This is not the case. It was merely one of several dialects into which the family of Semitic languages was divided. It seems to have been in large measure the speech of the people inhabiting Canaan at the time the first Hebrew immigrants reached the Mediterranean coast from their Aramean and Babylonian fatherlands. They absorbed the language of their new neighbors in Canaan, in so far as it differed from their former speech, and this in time came to be known as the Hebrew language. Its similarity to other Semitic dialects of the region is shown by the close resemblance of the characters on the Moabite Inscription of King Mesha and those of the Siloam Inscription. Though the Hebrew is by no means the most finished of the Semitic tongues, it is a remarkably expressive language, and the sacred writings of the Hebrews owe much of their picturesque and forceful character to the dialect in which they were recorded. (See G. R. Driver in *The People and the Book*, p. 74. Oxford Press, 1925.)

begged that he would slay them himself rather than dishonor them by committing the deed to his son, saying, "Rise thou and fall upon us, for as the man is, so is his strength." They were evidently quoting a familiar saying.[1] The question "Is Saul also among the prophets?" became a proverb applied to anyone who joined a group outside his social class.[2] In Ezekiel 12:21 reference is made to a proverb that was current in Palestine, "The days are prolonged and every vision faileth." More familiar still was the saying quoted with disapproval both by Ezekiel and Jeremiah, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge."[3] "They that speak in proverbs" are quoted as uttering an oracle against Moab[4] in language that resembles the national warning of the prophet Amos.[5] Probably most of such current sayings were gathered into collections like the book of Proverbs, but some persisted as stray utterances, even to New Testament times, such as the one quoted by Jesus, "Physician heal thyself,"[6] or that regarding the dog and the swine in 2 Pet. 2:22.

It would appear that the early Hebrews were also fond of riddles, and used them as means of entertainment at feasts, weddings and other social gatherings. The book of Judges contains several examples. Samson propounded a riddle to the guests at his marriage with a reward to the winner,[7] and when he lost his wager, he quoted a familiar proverb as covering his case.[8] Tradition reported the correspondence between David and King Hiram of Tyre as consisting in part of such puzzles.[9] Several examples of this sort of riddles

[1] Judg. 8:21; [2] 1 Sam. 10:11, 12; 19:24; [3] Ezek. 18:2; Jer. 31:29, 30; [4] Num. 21:27-30; [5] Chaps. 1, 2; [6] Luke 4:23; [7] Judg. 14:12 ff.; [8] V. 18; [9] Kings 5:1 ff.

that have passed into number sonnets are given in the Proverbs.[10]

Youthful races are poetic in their spirit, like the children of today. They love and make poetry. Fragments of such songs have been preserved in the narratives of ancient Israel. They probably belong to a much earlier age than the prose writings in which they are embedded. It is fortunate that they were familiar enough to be quoted by the later writers. There is, for example, the Sword Song of Lamech, the boast of a warrior over his prowess in battle.[11] There is the oracle of Noah regarding the fortunes of his three sons.[12] And the Well Song, quoted in part in Numbers 21:17, 18, is a reminiscence of the desert journey of Israel. These and others of like brevity are probably portions of longer poems, the remainder of which has been lost.

It is fortunate, however, that some of the early songs and ballads have survived in measurably complete form. Such is the Song of Deborah,[13] which celebrates the victory of Israel over the Canaanites and praises the courage of Jael in taking the life of the oppressor of her people. The Song by the Sea [14] is a paean of triumph over Israel's escape from Egypt and the overthrow of Pharaoh's hosts in the sea. This poem seems to have grown from its original form by the addition of stanzas that recount the later conquest of tribes on the road to Canaan. It may be that in the women's song of rejoicing over David's defeat of Goliath [15] there is given only a fragment of a much longer poem. The songs and blessings of Jacob and of Moses,[16] and the war song of

[10] Prov. 29:15, 16, 18, 19, 21–31; [11] Gen. 4:23–24; [12] Gen. 9:25–27; [13] Judg. 5; [14] Exod. 15; [15] 1 Sam. 18:6, 7; 21:11; 29:5; [16] Gen. 49; Deut. 31:22–30, 32, 33.

David[17] may have some actual connection with these national leaders, or may have been attributed to them by later poets. The oracles of the prophet Balaam against Moab and in praise of Israel form an interesting and impressive section of the book of Numbers.[18]

Along with these victory songs, there were treasured laments and elegies over the deaths of famous men. One of the most beautiful of these is the dirge of David for Saul and Jonathan, slain in the battle of Mount Gilboa.[19] This is called the Song of the Bow in honor of Jonathan, David's friend, and was quoted from a lost collection, probably of hero songs, known as the book of Jashar. From the same source is quoted the oracle regarding the arrested sun.[20] Another elegy of David's, the one for the murdered Abner, is apparently recorded only in a fragment.[21] Perhaps at a later time such bits of national poetry were gathered into collections like the book of Jashar, or the book of the Wars of Jahveh.[22] For centuries before there was any attempt to write down the floating poetry of remembrance, these and many other songs probably passed about as the common possession of the Hebrew bards and story-tellers.

Of course, the Hebrews possessed a background of tradition and mythology, like most nations. Stories and legends were handed down from their ancestors in Babylonia and Aram. Some of these ancient narratives are reproduced in the Old Testament or are mentioned in connection with current interests. Many peoples have their accounts of human beginnings and of primeval days. The

[17] 2 Sam. 22, recorded also as Psalm 18; [18] Num. 23:7–10, 18–24, 24:3–9, 15–24; [19] 2 Sam. 1:17–27; [20] Josh. 10:12, 13; [21] 2 Sam. 3:33, 34; [22] Num. 21:14, 15.

Hebrews were no exception to this rule. Their stories of creation, found in the first two chapters of Genesis, were evidently derived from Babylonian originals which may still be read in the religious poetry of that land.* Traditions regarding long-lived patriarchs and chiefs, like those recorded in Genesis 4 and 5, are found in the writings of other nations.† The narratives of the deluge [23] form part of the world's collection of tradition regarding tragedies resulting from floods, tidal waves and inundations. The story of the tower of Babel [24] was one of the early Semitic romances which, like the Greek legend of the giants who strove with Jove, told of the efforts of men to storm heaven and contend with deity, and the punishment that befell them in consequence. It is evident that the biblical narratives have preserved only a small part of what was current legend and mythology in Israel. What did the Hebrews believe regarding other human beings than those descended from Adam? Where did Cain find a wife? [25] What was the explanation of those strange marriages between angels and mortal women,[26] which form so important a section of the apocryphal book of Enoch, and are mentioned in the New Testament? [27]

Allusions to leviathan, the sea monster,[28] the dragon of the deep,[29] Rahab, the fabled mistress of the storm floods,[30] Lilith, the night demon,[31] Azazel, the evil spirit of the waste,[32] behemoth, the land monster,[33] the dreaded spirits

* Kent, *Beginnings of Hebrew History*, appendices 1 and 2.

† Lenormant, *Origins of History*, chapter 2.

[23] Gen. 6–8; [24] Gen. 11; [25] Gen. 4:16, 17; [26] Gen. 6:1–4; [27] Luke 10:18; 1 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; [28] Job 41:1–34; Pss. 74:14, 15; 104:26; Isa. 27:1; [29] Ps. 74; Isa. 51:9; [30] Isa. 51:9; [31] Isa. 34:14; [32] Lev. 16:8; [33] Job. 40:15–24;

of the desert,[34] and similar creatures of legend and mythology make evident the fact of that world of imagination and tradition which lay back of current Hebrew thought.

Probably the patriarchal traditions regarding Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph formed a part of a much larger mass of recital than has survived. These stories of exploits of their forefathers must have been repeated at the camp fires of the Hebrews for many generations before they were put into written form. They told of migrations from the lands of the great rivers of the east, lands which were the scene of military operations during the great world war, and are now being explored afresh by scholars in search of ancient remains. In coming to the west these emigrants crossed the Euphrates, from which fact they acquired the name Hebrews, the people who "crossed over" the great river, the "foreigners."[35] They told of arrival in Canaan and various wanderings and attempts at settlement there. According to these narratives, the early Hebrews gained but limited possession of the land, whose population, the result of former migrations, was much stronger than they. The relations established with the people of the land were only partial, and often not friendly. Feuds were frequent[36] and commercial dealings were conducted with reserve and caution.[37]

Several localities were occupied by the various clans of Hebrews, and some of them moved southward as far as Egypt, constituting doubtless a part of that greater Semitic movement which took possession of the Nile valley for some generations, until expelled by the revival of Egyptian na-

[34] Isa. 13:21; [35] Gen. 14; [36] Gen. 34; [37] Gen. 23.

tionalism under the kings of the seventeenth and eighteenth dynasties. It has been thought that Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the oppression, and Merneptah, his son, the ruler in the time of the Exodus under Moses. These Hebrew experiences are nowhere mentioned on the Egyptian monuments. But reference is made on a stele of Merneptah to the subjugation of Israelite clans in Canaan at this period,* which would imply that some of that race had remained there at the time of the migration to Egypt.

After a period of some years spent in the desert oases east of Egypt, partly in the vicinity of a mountain region called Sinai or Horab, now unknown,† the tribes of Israel, accompanied by certain friendly desert groups, made their way to the highlands east of the Jordan, and under Joshua and various other tribal chieftains, and at different times, crossed the river and gained possession of the central mountain range of western Palestine.‡ The book of Judges, probably the oldest of the biblical records, preserves some of the traditions of this period of struggle and chaos, with here and there a local leader arising to take the field against some one of the repeated inroads which distressed the villages. "There was no king in Israel in those days, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" [38]

* Price, *The Old Testament and Monuments*, p. 342 ff.

† The biblical records (Exod. 3:1; Deut. 33; Judg. 5:4, 5) locate Sinai somewhere in the region of Midian, Seir or Paran, east of Egypt, and south of the Dead Sea. The tradition which identifies the mountain of the law with Jubel Musa, the modern mountain and monastery of St. Catherine, is not earlier than the sixth century A.D.

‡ The name Palestine seems to have come from the fact that the Greek geographers mistook the Philistines of the southwest coast for the inhabitants of the whole of Canaan, and named the country accordingly.

[38] Judg. 17:7; 21:25.

is a fairly good description of an age of anarchy. Centuries later the story of the conquest was told in a highly romantic and dramatic manner in the book of Joshua, with the accompanying features of miracle, destruction of the native population, and brief, brilliant military achievement. The period of the judges closed with the ministry of Samuel, the first of the prophetic successors of Moses, and the man who laid the foundations of Israel's national life.

After the brief and tragic experiment of Saul, the kingdom of Israel was firmly established by David of Bethlehem, who with his son Solomon raised the status of the nation until it compared favorably with all but the great empires on the Nile and the Euphrates. The division of the kingdom, however, at the end of Solomon's reign (937 B.C.) destroyed forever the possibility of a really important state, and reduced the nation to two kingdoms of moderate size, Israel and Judah. These were sometimes allied and sometimes at war, and nearly always more or less in the position of war vassals to one or another of the stronger people about them — Syria, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Macedon, and finally Rome. Under these hammer blows of fate and conquest the northern kingdom of Israel succumbed to the Assyrians in 721 B.C., and the smaller state of Judah, which had preserved the Davidic dynasty throughout its three and a half centuries of history, perished with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and added a fresh chapter to the story of Israel's dispersion among the nations.

It was probably in the ninth century B.C., in the days of the two kingdoms, that the first writings took form. Down to that time the materials of Hebrew tradition, narrative,

poetry, folk-lore and custom-law had apparently been transmitted from memory and by word of mouth. Writing was not unknown, and among the older civilizations of Babylonia and Egypt it was widely practiced. But among the Hebrews there was little need for it until the rise of the prophetic and priestly groups, and the beginnings of a literary age.

Thus the early stages of biblical literature are seen to lie in the shadowy region of spoken rather than written words. It is fortunate indeed that so much of this ancient material was preserved in the practiced memories of later writers, and is to be found embedded in the documents now in our possession.

Note. The divine name Jahveh used in this book is believed by scholars to be the true form of the covenant name of deity represented in the Hebrew text by the *tetragrammaton* or four-letter term JHVH. It was never pronounced by the Jews, and wherever it occurred in the text the word Adonai, "my Lord," was substituted for it in the reading. By using the vowels of Adonai with the consonants JHVH the word "Jehovah" was contrived, which of course was neither a Hebrew nor an English word. It is a barbarism which only long usage in English Bibles could excuse. It seems better to employ the word in the form which we know from Greek renderings to have been its real pronunciation, or else use the translation LORD, as is done in most of the English versions. The word "Jehovah" has only the value of long and reverent usage, and rests on no authentic foundation.

III

THE PROPHETS AND THEIR WRITINGS

What kind of religious leaders did the Hebrews have and how were the records of their activities preserved? One may begin the answer by saying that there were three orders of men who taught in Israel — the prophets, the priests and the wise men or sages.[1] Each of these groups left writings which are included in the Old Testament. It is probable that the work of priestly ministry in the local sanctuaries began before there was any prophetic activity; for most communities had their local shrines or high places, corresponding to the village churches of today, only that there were no rival congregations of different sects. One community center of worship was sufficient. But as an order the prophets came before the priests both in the importance of their contribution to the national life and in the period at which their work reached its greatest value.

The word "prophet" means one who speaks forth, a preacher of the truth, a teacher of righteousness. In both Assyrian and Arabic speech the root so translated means an announcer, a proclaimer, an interpreter or mediator between deity and man. In the Old and New Testaments alike the term "prophecy" is applied to preaching. In popular usage during the past century there has been a tendency to restrict

[1] Jer. 18:18.

its meaning to prediction, but this was not the original purport of the word, and foretelling future events was but a small part of the function of the prophet. When Milton wrote his tract on "The Liberty of Prophesying," he meant by it the right to preach without official permission from the Established Church.

Probably most nations, particularly the more important ones, have had men who performed in some degree the work of prophets. Among the Egyptians and Babylonians there were those who proclaimed the duties of the moral life, the obligations of justice and mercy.* The fact that kings in their state records laid claim to wise and humane administration of government, to sympathetic regard for the poor and the unfortunate, shows that such ideals were proclaimed by moral leaders and were recognized by some of the people at least as obligatory on their rulers.

But in Israel the preaching of righteousness appears to have had a much more important place than among contemporary nations, and it gave rise to a class of men of unique significance in the history of ethics and religion. Indeed so outstanding was the work of the prophets that the later Hebrews were inclined to attribute to their first leaders the character of prophets without regard to the particular services they rendered. Abraham is called a prophet by one of the authors of Genesis,[2] and Jacob, in spite of frankly recorded moral delinquencies, is credited by prophetic writers with some of the worthful traits of their

* Smith, J. M. P., *The Prophet and His Problems*, chap. 1. Ipuwer of Egypt, whose date was somewhere between 2000 and 1800 B.C., has been called the first social prophet.

[2] Chap. 20:7.

order.[3] The function of the prophet as a speaker is illustrated by the reference to Aaron as the prophet of Moses his brother, who was less gifted in speech.[4]

When we first have a view of the prophets of Israel busy at their customary work, the spectacle is not particularly attractive. They hardly differed from the dervishes to be found in some parts of the Orient today. They went about the country in gypsy-like bands, shouting, singing, playing upon crude instruments, like the pipe, tambourine and drum, dancing and working themselves up into states of excitement which often resulted in their raving in ecstatic words or falling hypnotized and unconscious on the ground.[5] In fact in the speech of early Israel, to prophesy meant to rave. Saul in his fits of madness prophesied, i.e., carried on like a madman.[6] Several incidents are narrated of this chieftain in contact with the groups of prophets who differed so strikingly from him in their social status that when he was found among them and under their influence people exclaimed in wonder, "Is Saul among the prophets?"[7]

These bands of enthusiasts, going about the land, holding their exciting orgies, telling fortunes, and preaching the national religion, gave little promise of that notable service which the greater men of their order were to render. In the first days, as we are told,[8] those who were later called prophets were known as seers, clairvoyants, fortune-tellers. Probably none of the early stages of religion are wholly free from the practice of magic. This appears to have had its place

[3] Gen. 32:24–28; 35:10; [4] Exod. 7:1; [5] 1 Sam. 10:5; 19:23, 24; [6] 1 Sam. 18:10; [7] 1 Sam. 10:12; 19:24; [8] 1 Sam. 9:9.

among the primitive Israelites. Instances of this are the attempt of Balaam to put a ban or spell on Israel,[9] resort to a prophet as to a public diviner,[10] the use of a bronze snake as a device for healing,[11] various forms of omens, signs and divination which prevailed and were denounced by the greater prophets,[12] and the practice of astrology.[13] Dreams were regarded as intimations of the divine will,[14] and also the casting of lots, which is often mentioned.[15] Urim and Thummim ("lights and perfections")* were qualities supposed to reside in a magic stone worn in the breastplate or held in the hand or kept in the possession of a priest or diviner and capable of disclosing the will of deity.[16] It was in the capacity of a diviner that Saul first sought Samuel.[17]

There were behind the prophets the noble traditions of Moses and his achievements. His figure to be sure is considerably obscured by legend and romance. But in order to have gained so notable a name as captain, prophet and lawgiver, he must have possessed unusual qualities of leadership. His shadow was cast far down across the history of his people. Hosea declared that the Lord brought Israel up out of Egypt by a prophet (Moses), and by the same prophet he preserved them.[18] When later generations considered the need of a continuing order of men with the character of leaders, they reported Moses as promising that from time to time God would raise up from them a prophet like him-

* G. R. Driver derives the words from Assyrian and Babylonian roots meaning "oracles and spells." (Cf. *The People and the Book*, p. 90 f.)

[9] Num. 23, 24; [10] 1 Sam. 9:5–10; 1 Kings 14:1–3; [11] Num. 21:6–9; [12] Deut. 18:10; 1 Sam. 15:25; Isa. 8:19; 65:3–7; [13] Isa. 47:13; [14] Gen. 28:10–17; 40:5 ff.; 41:1 ff.; 1 Sam. 28:6, etc.; [15] E.g. Sam. 14:42; [16] Exod. 28:30; 1 Sam. 28:6 and often elsewhere; [17] 1 Sam. 9:5–8; [18] Chap. 12:13.

self.[19] Indeed they liked to think of Israel the nation as a prophet people, bearing to other races a divine message,[20] and they were glad to believe that Moses himself, far from being jealous of the preaching of other men, had wished that all the Lord's people were prophets.[21]

As to whether we owe any of the writings of the Old Testament to Moses himself is a question on which criticism is not entirely resolved. The first five books of the Bible, popularly called the Pentateuch,* the five rolls, lay abundant claim to Mosaic authority, and in certain parts, particularly the laws, to Mosaic authorship.[22] Yet the difficulty of ascribing any portion of these writings to that ancient leader is evident from the contents of the documents themselves, and has led to revision of Jewish and early Christian views. It was natural that the laws of Israel should be ascribed to the man who was the outstanding prophet and lawgiver of the first, the Egyptian, period of Israel's history. That belief became the accepted tradition, and is embodied in the books of the Hexateuch. Something of Moses' life and teaching was undoubtedly handed down in oral form, and even perhaps in writing, and was included in such later narratives as those of Deuteronomy and the priestly records of Leviticus and Numbers. The authors of Deuteronomy, writing sometime in the seventh century B.C., declared that there had not arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses.[23]

After the tribes secured a foothold in Palestine under various leaders, such as Joshua and Caleb, and had passed

* Scholars now recognize the close relationship of Joshua to the five books that precede it, and usually refer to the six as a unit, the Hexateuch.

[19] Deut. 18:15; [20] Isa. 42:6; [21] Num. 11:29; [22] Exod. 24:4; 34:27, 28; Deut. 31:24; [23] Deut. 34:10–12.

through some decades of varying fortune at the hands of their Canaanite neighbors and invaders from the desert, during which period the people, the language and the culture of Canaan were gradually absorbed, a really notable leader appeared in the person of Samuel. He combined in himself the qualities of prophet, seer, judge, and military leader. He appears to have been the last of that rough and ready order of local chieftains known as the judges, some of whose exploits are narrated in the book of that name, a very old body of narratives.

Dedicated in infancy to the service of the sanctuary, and reared among the priests at Shiloh, Samuel may have learned from them the art of divination, for which he was known in later days.[24] After the destruction of that shrine by the Philistines he established himself at Ramah and from that center made pilgrimages to various localities like Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah, holding assemblies of the people which were a sort of combination of terms of court and religious revivals. Gradually he attached to himself the groups of "prophets," the wanderers and dervishes of the ecstatic type, and located them in the places he visited. These "sons of the prophets" so often mentioned in the record formed the groups to which the title of "schools of the prophets" has been appropriately applied. They were probably the earliest approaches to schools known in Israel. Like the monasteries of the middle ages, they served the purposes of instruction for their order. They preserved the teachings of Moses, Samuel and other leaders of their class, and carried out their messages to wider communities. Here also the first stages

[24] 1 Sam. 9:5, 6.

of prophetic writing were probably carried on. Whatever of written material existed would naturally be collected and multiplied in these circles.

One instance alone is given of writing by Samuel. On the choice of Saul as king, the prophet is said to have admonished the people on the nature and meaning of their new form of government, and to have written out in a book the substance of his instructions.[25] No further mention is made of such a "book," and if actually written it probably perished, or its substance may have been incorporated by the Deuteronomists in their code of laws regarding kings.[26]

Not long after the time of Samuel, David a young shepherd from Bethlehem rose to power in the army and household of Saul, the first king of Israel, and after Saul's death in battle with the Philistines he succeeded him as ruler. David's date was probably not far from 1000 B.C., and according to frequent custom he was credited with a reign of forty years. There are evidences of literary work in this period. To David were attributed the dirges over Saul and Jonathan, and Abner.[27] Tradition assigned to him the composition of psalms, such as the eighteenth, an early war song, duplicated in 2 Sam. 22, and later generations made him the author of half the hymns in the book of Psalms. Some foundation for such beliefs there must have been;* however the modern scholar finds it necessary to reduce to limited terms the Davidic element in the Psalter.

* Such a basis is found in the references to David as a minstral in 1 Sam. 16:17, 18, and to his use of the harp in Amos 6:5, and in the traditions regarding his part in the organization of the liturgical features of public worship found in 1 Chron. 16.

[25] 1 Sam. 10:25; [26] Deut. 17: 14–20; [27] 2 Sam. 1:17–27; 3:33, 34.

In his reign and that of his son, Solomon,[28] there were men who wrote accounts of current events and some facts regarding the kings. Mention is made of a book of Samuel the seer, one of Nathan the prophet, one of Gad the seer,[29] and of a book of the Acts of Solomon.[30] The author of 2 Chronicles 9:29 refers to the book of Nathan the prophet, and to the prophecy of Ahijah of Shiloh and the visions of Iddo the seer.* There were also scribes and recorders in the courts of David and his successors,[31] who were doubtless the writers of those lost "Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" and of Judah so often cited by the authors of our books of Kings and Chronicles as among their sources.[32] Much of this work was prophetic in character, written not merely as historical record, but for purposes of ethical instruction.[33]

The division of the kingdom at the close of Solomon's reign (937 B.C.) was the work of the prophets of the national faith under the leadership of Ahijah of Shiloh. They dreaded the effects of the centralizing and despotic character of the government upon the popular religion, and chose rather to wreck the national unity than to invite moral disaster. Their efforts were but partially successful, for the

* Additional references are made to the "words of Shemiah the prophet," and of "Iddo the seer" (2 Chron. 12:15), the former of whom is mentioned in 1 Kings 12:22 and elsewhere, and many prophets are named of whom no writing is affirmed, such as Azariah son of Oded (2 Chron. 15:2–7), Hanani the seer (2 Chron. 16:7), Jehu the prophet (1 Kings 16:1, 7, 12) and Jonah the prophet (2 Kings 14:25), the probable model for the fictitious Jonah of the book of that name (see p. 109 f.). In addition many unnamed prophets are mentioned throughout the prophetic narratives (cf. 1 Sam. 2:27; 1 Kings 20:35 f.; 22:6; 2 Kings 9:1 f.; 2 Chron. 25:7 f., etc.).

[28] 977–937 B.C.; [29] 1 Chron. 29:29; [30] 1 Kings 11:41; [31] 2 Sam. 8:16, 17; [32] 2 Kings 8:23; 10:34; 12:19; 2 Chron. 24:27; 28:26; 32:32, etc.; [33] 2 Chron. 20:34; cf. 1 Kings 16:1.

northern kingdom, deprived of contact with the sanctuary at Jerusalem, fell an easy prey to the heathen influences of the neighboring lands, and even the kingdom of Judah felt the evil effects of foreign manners. Reforms were organized in the north by Elijah and his successor, Elisha, who employed the drastic methods of revolution against the dynasty of Ahab. But the moral tone of both kingdoms declined and more urgent voices were needed.* The persecutions under Jezebel, Ahab's energetic and fanatical queen, greatly weakened the prophetic order. From that time onward the men of that group tended to professional rather than vital religious leadership, and became a menace rather than a help to the worship of Jahveh. The greater moral leaders regarded them as false prophets and severed all connections with them, as in the cases of Micaiah, Amos, etc.[34]

Of literary work in this period there is little mention. Jezebel, the queen in Samaria, wrote letters to the chiefs of Jezreel regarding Naboth and his vineyard,[35] and Elijah is said to have written a reproving letter to Jehoram of Judah.[36] But the fact that the Chroniclers ignore systematically the northern kingdom and all its activities and make no other mention of Elijah throws some doubt upon that reference.

The most notable achievement of the prophetic order in the days that followed the reforms instituted by Elijah and carried to their bloody conclusion by Jehu was the prepara-

* The greatness of these two prophetic leaders as moral and political defenders of the state is echoed in the words of keen regret addressed to each of them at the close of his career, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." They were a greater protection to Israel than hosts of armed men (2 Kings 2:12; 13:14).

[34] 1 Kings 22:5–28; Amos 7:10–15; [35] 1 Kings 21:8, 9; [36] 2 Chron. 21:12.

tion of a body of narratives covering in the prophetic manner the entire course of events from the beginnings of the world to their own time as embodied in the traditions handed down in their circle. These prophets appear to have lived in the southern kingdom of Judah and may have been stimulated to their task by the recent reforms in the north and the overthrow of the idolatrous queen Athaliah by the priest Jehoiada and the young king Joash in Jerusalem. These events occurred about 842 and 836 B.C., respectively, and probably about 825 B.C. the prophets put forth their record. From the fact that it was the product of the Judean school of leaders it is usually called the Judean prophetic document. From the added fact that it employs predominantly the divine name Jahveh, it is often called the Jahvist or "J" narrative. It is found in longer or shorter sections all the way from Genesis 2, through portions of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (briefly in chapter 34), Joshua (slightly in chapters 2 and 9) and Judges.*

The style is free and flowing, the narratives are vivid and concise. Jahveh is represented as an intimate, friendly deity, conversing freely with man, and taking an active part in the affairs of his people. The places and leaders named are chiefly those of Judah. The manners are simple and primitive. But the will of Jahveh as the divine ruler is the supreme duty of man. These narratives were not the product of a single writer but belong to a school or circle of prophets, and were supplemented by later writers who

* The analysis of the "J" document, with references to the biblical text may be found in Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the O. T.* pp. 117–122, or in Kent's *Beginnings of Hebrew History*, pp. 31–37, and Chart, pp. XIII–XXX.

wrought in the same spirit and whose work, while distinctive, belongs in the same body of teaching. Such stories as the second narrative of creation,[37] the temptation and sin of man,[38] the sons of God and the daughters of men,[39] the tower of Babel,[40] the destruction of Sodom and the deliverance of Lot,[41] the marriage of Isaac,[42] Jacob's meeting with Rachel [43] and his return to Canaan [44] belong to this document.

It was the purpose of the writers of this body of narratives to give a prophetic interpretation of human affairs, and particularly of Hebrew experiences from the earliest times down to the age of its authors. The fact that later on it was blended with another series of narratives accounts for the fragmentary form in which it is found in the Old Testament. But this fact cannot obscure the graphic nature of its story of the past, nor the urgent faith and patriotism of its authors. It has preserved in first-hand form a large proportion of the source material upon which our knowledge of Israel's early history and religion rests.

Some time in the next century, probably about 750 B.C., another body of narratives, prophetic in character, took form in the northern part of the country. It began doubtless like the former document with a recital of the story of creation and the primitive experiences of the race, but nothing remains of these early portions. It begins at the story of Abraham and Abimelech [45] and continues intermittently through the remaining books of the Hexateuch. It uses to a considerable extent, though not exclusively, the divine

[37] Gen. 2; [38] Gen. 4; [39] Gen. 6:1–4; [40] Gen. 11; [41] Gen. 18:16–19:28; [42] Gen. 24; [43] Gen. 29:1–14; [44] Gen. 32:3–33:17; [45] Gen. 20.

name Elohim, usually translated "God," and so is often called the Elohistic source. It is chiefly concerned with places and leaders belonging to the northern kingdom. From the fact that the northern kingdom was often called Ephraim from its leading tribe, as well as from the employment of the name Elohim, this body of narratives is often called the "E" document. Its style is quite different from the "J" writings. It is less anthropomorphic, that is, God is not represented so much as taking an active part in human affairs, but rather as accomplishing his purposes through chosen leaders with whom he communicates by means of dreams and visions. Idolatry is more strongly disapproved. The authors are more sensitive to moral qualities in the heroes of the record. The spirit of this source is more nearly that of the prophets Amos and Hosea, whose ministry fell in this general period. Among the narratives that belong to the "E" source are the sacrifice of Isaac,[46] Jacob's purchase of his brother's birthright,[47] Jacob's marriages,[48] Joseph's interpretation of dreams,[49] Joseph's interview with his brothers,[50] and the last days of Joseph.

Each of these documents is marked by words and phrases peculiar to itself. As in the case of the Judean record later additions were probably made to the Ephraimite source. At some period after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 721 B.C. the two documents were combined by Judean prophets whose groups alone survived. This blending of the narratives probably took place about 650 B.C. It accounts for numerous duplications where the same incident is repeated in slightly different form. It also accounts for

[46] Gen. 22; [47] Gen. 29:27–34; [48] Gen. 29:15–30; [49] Gen. 40; [50] Gen. 42.

the fact that the Judean element predominates in the combined account, which is known as " JE."

During this earlier period of the prophetic activity, there was felt the influence of the " sons of the prophets," the preachers who were related to the " schools of the prophets " and went out through the land interpreting the ideals of men like Moses, Samuel, Elijah and Elisha. Many references are made in the literature to these unnamed teachers, whose manners had improved and whose utterances had taken on a higher character with the growth of prophetic purpose. To such men and the labors of their circles we owe much of that body of narrative that occupies so large a portion of the Old Testament from Genesis to Kings.

Even in this early and rude period of Hebrew life certain admirable moral qualities are evident and are more definitely and habitually exhibited than in any other ancient civilization. Among them were honesty, fidelity to truth, faithful payment of debts, respect for leaders, courage in danger, bravery in battle, unselfish devotion to family, friends or causes, hospitality to strangers, kindness to the poor and the unfortunate, and justice in the courts. That there were many departures from these ideals is made clear by the record and by the rebukes of the religious leaders. Yet the standard of moral conduct was relatively high, and in this regard Israel became a pattern to the nations. The writings of the Old Testament are the open witness of these facts.

And how did it come to pass that out of such a little country, and from such an inconspicuous people there emerged such ideals and such a literature? Many factors seem to have contributed to this result. Palestine was in the cen-

ter of the ancient world. It was located at the meeting point of three continents. It was secluded, with barriers of mountain, desert and sea, and yet open to contacts with all the world. It was the bridge between the empires of the Euphrates and the Nile. It was the buffer state between north and south. It was the battle ground of the centuries, so that its plain of Megiddo seemed to a later apocalyptist to be the Armageddon, where the world's final conflict between righteousness and evil was to be fought.[51] The trade caravans of all the earth passed through that land, and yet its people were largely undisturbed on their highlands. They had brought from the desert in the past the roughness, the hardihood, and the mental alertness of that austere region. The monotheism which would appear to be suited to desert dwellers was not wholly overcome by the polytheism and the seductions of a settled land when they entered Canaan. The comparative isolation of Israel on its mountain ridge aided the prophets in their passion for the worship of Jahveh, their national God from the desert, and their struggle for a nobler morality than that which existed in the pagan states around them. In the struggle with these neighboring peoples Israel finally went down. But out of that incessant conflict certain world ideals emerged, and certain experiences were achieved in virtue of which this people, few in numbers and living in "the least of all lands," became the moral leader of the nations, the parent of three monotheistic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism — and the pioneer in the vanguard of the world's spiritual progress.

[51] Rev. 16:6.

IV

THE GREAT PROPHETS AND THE DECLINE OF PROPHECY

It is with the arrival of Amos of Tekoa that the real ministry of the prophets begins, and we are able to lay hands on the authentic words of these moral leaders. There is a thrill in the fact that on opening the book of Amos one is reading the first actual writing of a man of this order and one of the earliest books in the Bible. Here is the thrust and urgency of the spoken word. Like the other documents of its kind, the book of Amos is plainly a series of messages, sermons preached on the streets of Bethel or Samaria, with brief editorial notes interspersed. These sermons are probably but a small part of what the prophet said during the years of his ministry, and doubtless they only contain a portion of what he said on any one occasion. Little light is thrown by the biblical records on the manner in which the prophetic books like Amos took form. Did the prophet write out his oracles, and read them to his audiences, like some modern preachers? Did he, after preaching, write out the substance of what he had said, in order to preserve it, or to distribute it to wider circles? Or did followers and disciples of his write what they were able to recall of his sermons, and use them in the wider ministries of their order, or preserve them for study in the schools of the prophets?

We do not know. But the last is not an unreasonable conjecture and is strengthened by Isaiah's reference to his circle of disciples. Nor is the reader sure that the entire material of any particular prophetic book is the work of the man whose name it bears. Authorship was held of slight account in antiquity. But there is no reason to doubt that the substance of the book of Amos came out of the ministry of that stern and aggressive herdsman and farmer.

He appeared with his cattle and his figs in the markets of northern Israel about the year 750 B.C. and began presently to preach against the luxury, the dishonesty and the immorality of the wealthy inhabitants of the capital. Jeroboam II (781–740 B.C.) was in the midst of his successful reign. Samaria was the seat of government, and Bethel, Gilgal, Dan and other northern cities had sanctuaries, in at least two of which golden bulls had been set up by the first Jeroboam (937–915 B.C.) as the images of Jahveh.[1] Though he did not belong to the professional group known as the prophets or the " sons of the prophets," as the order was popularly called, Amos was stirred by what he saw of idolatry and social injustice in the towns of Israel, and felt himself commissioned of God to preach those sermons of reproof and warning of which the book is the record.

He first gained the attention of his audience by denouncing the neighboring nations, Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon, Moab and Judah. Then he warned the people of Israel, the nation in whose chief cities he was stopping. The sins of a country acquiring wealth and forgetting God were charged against them, and the approaching trag-

[1] 1 Kings 12:26–29.

edy of Assyrian invasion was indicated as the punishment for the evils of the age. By direct preaching and by figurative speech the prophet fulfilled his mission as a moral leader, a reprover of the unsocial conduct of the chiefs and the commoners of the northern kingdom that was so soon to come to its end. The book of Amos furnishes a vivid commentary upon the morals and the manners of the time, and the reason why the prophets of the Lord found their task so difficult.

Soon after the ministry of this prophet another appeared in Samaria, a younger man named Hosea. He may have been a listener to some of the public utterances of Amos, but neither mentions the other in the writings that have survived from them. Hosea was a native of Israel, a young man of ability, whose ministry covered a much longer period than that of his older colleague. He lived in the prosperous days of Jeroboam II and in the period of chaos and decline that followed. It was but twenty years from the death of Jeroboam until Sargon of Assyria took Samaria (721 B.C.) and brought the kingdom of Israel to its close. During that brief time six kings followed each other in swift succession, and four of them perished by assassination. It was a time of confusion and collapse.

Hosea came to his prophetic task by reason of domestic unhappiness, which is described either in fact or parable in the first three chapters of the book that bears his name. That book is first in the list of the so-called minor prophets, but the order of these books is unrelated to their dates. Hosea's domestic tragedy brought to him with startling reality the pathos of God's experience with Israel, whom the

prophet likens to an unfaithful wife. That was the new and unhappy interpretation of the nation's attitude toward its divine Lord and husband. The story told in those first chapters regarding Hosea, whether it is an actual experience of his or a dramatic picture of the immorality of the times, sets Jahveh in vivid contrast with the Baals of Palestine as the real lover and lord of Israel. The remainder of the book is a record of Hosea's preaching in Samaria the capital and of the swift decline of Israel to the abyss of ruin. The message of the preacher was a reflection of the sentiment of the forsaken lover and husband. Never does he despair of the ultimate redemption of his faithless wife or of the fickle people, and his pleas are urged with a heart-breaking tenderness that at times mingles with the furious jealousy of one who is always hopeful of amendment, and is ever suffering disappointment. Assessed in terms of achievement of the ends sought, the work of Amos and Hosea must be regarded as a failure, for the nation did not repent, and the end came swiftly and tragically. But the new standards of social justice and personal integrity set by these moral leaders mark them as among the great voices of Israel's history, fitting predecessors of the prophets who followed.

Of these the most notable was Isaiah of Jerusalem, whose ministry fell in the period between 739 and 701 B.C., during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah. In fact with the work of Isaiah and his contemporary, Micah, prophecy passed from the northern to the southern kingdom. Hitherto the prophets were mostly men of the north. Now, by reason of the fall of Samaria, the field of

this ministry was narrowed to the small region of Judah. The book of Isaiah, the longest in chapters in its present form, is in reality the work of at least three different writers, and only the first portion [2] belongs to the ministry of the great prophet of Jerusalem. These chapters are not arranged in chronological order, and their sequence has to be determined in relation to the historical background furnished by the second book of Kings.

The call of the young man Isaiah to his prophetic work occurred in 739 B.C., "the year that King Uzziah died," and is related in chapter 6. From that experience came the consciousness of a holy mission to Judah, and the program of national and civic life disclosed by the God of whom the prophet henceforth spoke as "the Holy One of Israel." The materials of the portion of the book belonging to the ministry of Isaiah may be grouped in three periods, corresponding roughly to the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. The sermons in the first section, "the Exalted Mountain," chapters 2–4, and "the Vineyard," chapter 5, present a convincing picture of the prophet's personality and message, as well as some idea of the times. The second period finds its climax in the crisis of 734 B.C., when in the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz Judah was threatened with the hostility of Syria and Israel to compel her assistance against the oncoming Assyrians.[3] By the prophet's insistence Judah was kept out of the northern alliance, but Ahaz foolishly bought the help of Tiglath-Pileser, the dreaded conqueror, and thereby involved his kingdom and his successors in a heavy annual tribute.[4] The fall of Damascus, and later that of Samaria,

[2] Isa. 1–39; [3] 2 Kings 15:37–16:9; [4] Isa. 7–9.

were themes of these years.[5] Damascus fell in 732 B.C., as Isaiah had foreseen, and Israel a decade later. The third outstanding event in the prophet's ministry was the siege and deliverance of Jerusalem, so graphically portrayed in chapters 36 and 37 and reported also in 2 Kings 18, 19. The devastation of Judah by Sennacherib of Assyria, related in graphic detail in his own cylinders, and pictured as well in Isaiah 1, left the kingdom stripped and impoverished, but the capital at least was spared for another century.

During the forty years of Isaiah's ministry he stood as Judah's ideal prophet-statesman. His advice on matters of political nature was not always heeded, and the results were unfortunate. He was not always correct in his forecast of the future, as when he predicted the rise of a delivering king to beat back the Assyrian foe.[6] But his teachings lifted still higher the standard erected by Amos and Hosea, and his name went down the centuries as the greatest of the prophets of God through Hebrew history. It was not strange that under the protection of his name were gathered the writings of men of different periods and varying points of view. The book that bears his name is proof of that fact. And its title carried his authority to oracles that he never saw.* But there was a certain fitness in making him, of all the prophetic leaders in Israel, the chief and head.

While Isaiah was preaching in Jerusalem, another prophet was voicing the wrongs of the peasant, rural class on the western slopes of Palestine. Micah lived in the town of Moreshah, not far from the ancient Gath. His message is

* Such as chapts. 40–66. See also the view presented by Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, pp. 53–76.

[5] Isa. 17, 28; [6] Isa. 9:1–7.

that of a countryman, whose neighbors were suffering from the exactions of their absentee landlords, who lived in Jerusalem or Samaria and drew their revenues from the hard labor of the tenant farmers. He spoke as a defender of his class, a tribune of the peasantry. He may have known Isaiah, his fellow prophet up at the capital. They both make use of a dramatic oracle, "the Exalted Mountain," perhaps the original utterance of Isaiah, and perhaps from an earlier seer.[7] At all events Micah appears to have denounced the evils of rural oppression as did Isaiah those of the city. It is not surprising that so fearless a preacher should have offended the social leaders of his time and brought himself into acute danger.[8] He might well have suffered martyrdom for his courageous words had not Hezekiah the king recognized the justice of his plea. It may well be that some of the reforms of that reign were due to Micah's intrepid words.[9]

The ruler who followed Hezekiah in 686 B.C., was Manasseh, a man of totally different spirit. Reacting violently against the teachings of the prophets of Jahveh, he promoted heathen worship in the land and persecuted the faithful.[10] His son Amon held to the same course. It was not until Josiah came to power in 639 B.C. that better days dawned. A friend to the ancient faith, he introduced reforms and restored the temple. In the course of that good work there was discovered a book of law, manifestly prepared by anxious priests and prophets in the dark days of persecution, and carrying the traditions of Moses' teaching and the new laws suited to the later time. That was the basis of the

[7] Mic. 4:1–3; cf. Isa. 2:2–4; [8] Jer. 26:17–19; [9] 2 Kings 18:1–8; [10] 2 Kings 21.

great reformation projected by the king throughout his realm. Into that enterprise the loyal prophets and priests, including probably the young Jeremiah, threw themselves with enthusiasm, and for a brief period a better day seemed to have dawned. But the unhappy end of Josiah's career at Megiddo cut short the movement, and the last days of Judah came swiftly on.[11]

During the long reign of Manasseh the voice of prophecy had been almost completely silenced. It was not until the more favorable days of Josiah's rule that the men of God had opportunity to speak. The first of those who gave forth an oracle was Nahum. His theme was the approaching downfall of the Assyrian empire, that came to its end under the combined assaults of the Medes and Babylonians in 607 B.C. That gigantic power that had swept westward in great impulses from the middle of the eighth century B.C., and had reached the acme of its ambition in the conquest of Thebes the capital of Egypt in 662 B.C., had taken all before it on its devastating way. Hamath, Arpad, Damascus, Samaria, Philistia and Judah had fallen victims to its rapacity. It was the most hated of kingdoms. Nahum, with the clear vision of a seer, foresaw its inevitable overthrow, and some years before that tragic event, perhaps about 625 B.C., described its fall in words of fierce eagerness and complete confidence.

The most exciting event of the early portion of Josiah's reign was the invasion of the western lands by a host of Scythians, wild horsemen, who like the Huns of later days spread terror before them and left ruin behind. It is not

[11] 2 Kings 22, 23.

probable that Judah was actually overrun by these barbarians, but the universal alarm caused by their presence in Syria and their raids along the Mediterranean coast gave another prophet his theme — the coming day of destruction for Judah, still under the influence of the long idolatry of Manasseh's reign. "The great day of the Lord" formed the subject of Zephaniah's thought, and passed over into mediaeval poetry in the classic hymn, "Dies irae, dies illa." In this brief prophecy, as in Amos, the catalogue of nations who were to suffer was but the prelude to the announcement of Jerusalem's punishment, because she was proud, oppressive and disobedient, her rulers avaricious and rapacious, and her religious leaders perverters of their office. The closing part of the book is more hopeful. The emphasis of Zephaniah was upon the certainty of divine wrath against sin, but also the redemptive character of its penalties, with the further suggestion that redemption included not only Israel but all nations.

Habakkuk is another of the prophets regarding whom nothing is known beyond the title of the book. The situation revealed in this short volume seems to have been the change of world power from Assyrian to Babylonian hands, from one despotism to another. Had anything been gained by this transfer of world dominion from one unscrupulous nation to one just as bad? Was it not as hard a fate to be under the heel of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) as of the Assyrians? How could the divine purpose be justified in the face of such events? This is one of the ever-recurring forms of the world-old problem of evil and its reconciliation with divine providence. The message is in the form of a di-

alogue between God and the prophet. After asking how God can use so barbarous an instrument for the accomplishment of his will, the seer pauses for a reply, which comes at last in the form of an oracle: "The Chaldean is indeed puffed up with pride; but the just man shall be saved by his faithfulness." The divine purpose may seem mysterious, but the people of God must wait in confidence. The righteous man saves himself by trusting Jahveh. The closing chapter is a majestic ode whose theme is confidence in God and in his power and willingness to aid his people.

If Hosea may be called the prophet of the decline and fall of Israel, certainly Jeremiah is worthy the title of the prophet of the decline and fall of Judah. His ministry extended over half a century, from the middle of Josiah's reign till after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. His call came in the thirteenth year of the king, with whom he lived in true companionship, preaching his message of protest against the seductive survivals of the days of Manasseh.[12] When the law book (Deuteronomy) was found in the temple, he preached the principles of the new covenant along with the other reformers of the time, in spite of the difficulties encountered.[13] The tragic death of Josiah removed his royal friend and the protector of the entire prophetic group. That circle was rapidly diminished, until Jeremiah stood practically alone, with Jehoiakim the king and the court hostile to his work. It had been the happy fortune of Isaiah to preach a doctrine of optimism, believing that the safety of Jerusalem was essential to the divine purpose. It was the tragedy of Jeremiah's ministry that he had to insist that

[12] Jer. 1–6; [13] Jer. 11, 12.

Jerusalem had passed her day of grace and that it was too late to escape the destruction and dispersion which alone could bring true repentance. His was a sad and hazardous career. The victim of persecution and plots, he was more than once in peril of his life. The nation had relapsed into idolatry after the death of Josiah, and the court encouraged the debacle of the reformation. Throughout the years of Jehoiakim (605–597 B.C.) Jeremiah's situation was pathetic indeed. His treatment by the king is well illustrated by Jehoiakim's contemptuous destruction of the roll of oracles prepared with so much labor by the imprisoned prophet.[14]

Hardly more favorable was his position during the following reigns of Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. His advice that the city ought not to attempt the impossible adventure of resisting the Babylonian army on its approach brought on him a fresh outburst of anger on the part of the jingo patriots at the court. All he could do was to appeal to the future and insist that though Jerusalem was doomed to fall, the people should return from their expatriation after seventy years of discipline and restore the ruined capital. When the city finally fell, owing to the folly of the royal advisers and the lack of a sane policy, Jeremiah was given by the Babylonian commander the melancholy choice of going with the captives to the far lands of their deportation or of remaining with those who were deemed worthless for purposes of removal. He chose the latter course, as likely to be of greater advantage to his unhappy people. But soon after he was carried away into Egypt, reluctant and protesting, by a company of his fellow Hebrews, who were terrified

[14] Jer. 36.

by the murder of the governor, Gedaliah, and fearful of retaliation by Babylon. The last seen of this martyr-prophet is on the banks of the Nile, still warning his fickle countrymen against the disasters of idolatry.

The little book of Obadiah contains a message on a theme never forgotten in the dark days which followed the fall of Jerusalem. That was the hatred felt for the people of Edom, who had always been the subject of bitter invective by all the prophets and poets of Israel from the days of Amos onward. It appears that at the siege of Jerusalem they hailed with savage joy the overthrow of the city, and added their taunts to the sorrows of its unhappy citizens. Whether the fragment of prophecy that goes by the name of this prophet was composed shortly after the overthrow of the city in 586 B.C. or at some later time is not certain, but it voiced the feelings of the harassed people in one of the saddest moments of their history, and denounced vengeance upon the hated sons of Edom.

In some regards the period that followed the fall of the city was the most significant in the story of the nation. It began with the destruction of Jerusalem, and really never came to an end. For few if any of those who went away from Judah ever returned. Some of their children came back after half a century had passed, but the great majority of the race was dispersed in the east and south and made up the groups of Hebrews in Persia, Babylonia and Egypt in that and later centuries. During that first fifty years there were three significant prophetic voices whose messages were outstanding in the writings of the Old Testament. The first of these was Jeremiah of Jerusalem, whose ministry of

fifty years has already been reviewed. The second was Ezekiel of Tel-abib in Babylonia. And the third was perhaps the most impressive and influential of the three — the unknown prophet, whose utterances are found in Isaiah, chapters 40–55, and who is usually called the Second Isaiah, the Isaiah of the Exile, or the Evangelical Prophet.*

Among the Jews who were taken to Babylonia by Nebuchadrezzar in 597 B.C., after Jerusalem was besieged and brought to subjection, was a young man named Ezekiel, of priestly family. The group of Hebrews to which he belonged was located at a place called Tel-abib on one of the irrigation canals of southern Babylonia, a stream called Chebar. Five years later he began to exercise the functions of a prophet, called to his ministry by a vision of the glory of God and his presence with his people even in the lands of their expatriation. The book which records his service in that little town gives a picture of the experiences of a typical Hebrew colony in Babylonia. This book, unlike those of Isaiah and Jeremiah, is fairly consecutive in its material.

It falls into three sections: (1) The story of the ministry of the prophet in Tel-abib, from the date of his call to the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem.[15] During these five years Ezekiel endeavored to convince his countrymen that their exile was not a mere temporary episode, but that the city they had left was doomed to destruction because of its sins, many of which he described in picturesque language, parable and vision. He refuted the popular idea that they were the

* Professor Torrey holds that chapters 34–66, with the exception of 36–39, form a homogeneous group, and are the work of a single hand (*op. cit.* p. 53).

[15] Ezek. 1–24.

victims of their fathers' evil-doings and insisted on the individual responsibility of each man. At last he learned that the king of Babylon had actually begun the investment of Jerusalem. (2) From that time he ceased his public preaching regarding the sins of Judah and turned his attention to the neighboring lands, after the example of Amos and later prophets. Ammon, Moab, Edom, the Philistines, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt are summoned to undergo the divine discipline because of their iniquities. These national oracles were of course intended for the instruction of his own people and probably were never conveyed to the peoples with whom they were supposed to deal.[16] (3) At last a refugee from Jerusalem brought the news that the city had fallen. The tidings caused the greatest consternation among the people in Telabib. Hitherto they had been so confident of a speedy end to their exile that the words of the prophet fell on deaf ears. Now all was changed. He was vindicated, and his influence immeasurably extended. But the sad news that Jerusalem was no more and that the best of her people were on their way to Babylonia in the company of their childless and blinded king filled all hearts with a tragic sense of hopelessness. It was now that Ezekiel's work began afresh. It was necessary to revive confidence in the certainty of Jahveh's promises of restoration. Here the third part of the book begins. The future program of the nation is outlined. The land of Palestine is to be cleansed of the presence of pagan and defiling peoples, the nation itself is to be purified, given a new heart and raised to fresh life. But best of all, a new temple, greater and more beautiful than the

[16] Ezek. 25–32.

structure reared by Solomon, is to be set up in the restored city, and all the land is to be made fresh and fertile by the river of God that is to flow from the threshold of the holy house.[17] These hopes, like many others inspired by the prophets, were never realized in their literal form. But they served the end of encouragement in days when the nation seemed on the point of complete collapse, and to them much of the later achievement of Judah was due.

In the year 538 B.C. Cyrus the Persian became master of the Babylonian empire, and world rule passed from Semitic to Aryan hands. There was little change however in the condition of the Hebrews either in the east or the west. Cyrus issued his decree permitting all exiles in his realm to return to their former homes. But few of the Hebrews availed themselves of this opportunity. Perhaps none would have done so had there not been lifted a new prophetic voice among them. The task which Jeremiah and Ezekiel had carried on with devotion during the early years of the age of dispersion was taken up by an unknown prophet in the last decade of the half century of captivity. That message is found in the second part of the book of Isaiah.[18] In many respects it is the greatest of the prophetic utterances. Beginning with the heartening words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God," it sounds clearly its four notes of prophetic assurance: The nation is to return to its homeland of Judah; Jahveh its God is incomparably more potent than the hand-made gods of Babylonia; Cyrus the Persian, now on the frontier of the empire, will conquer it and be the

[17] Ezek. 33–48; [18] Isa. 40–55.

divine agent for Israel's release; and the Servant of God, — sometimes thought of as the nation, sometimes as the righteous remnant, the nucleus in which hope remains, and sometimes as an individual, a martyr-prophet, a suffering servant of God, — is to succeed in his mission of national and world redemption. The realization of these hopes, as the writers of the New Testament perceived, came not through the dismembered and scattered nation, nor through any elect remnant, nor through any martyr-prophet like Jeremiah, or stricken king like Jehoiachin, but through the life and ministry of One greater than all, who in due time appeared to fulfill the high task which Israel could not accomplish.

This was the last of the great prophetic messages. In those that followed there is found less of the true inspiration which made notable the work of the great moral leaders of the nation. With the coming of Cyrus the Persian to the throne of the empire and of the world, hopes were revived for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the restoration of the national life. Small companies of Hebrews made their way back to Judah. Their coming gave those of Palestine courage to undertake the revival of their institutions. It seemed that the promises of the prophets of the exile were about to be realized. Under the leadership of two prophets of the country, Haggai and Zechariah, the plan of rebuilding the temple was undertaken in 520 B.C., and after many delays and much difficulty it was brought to its completion in 516 B.C. The nominal leaders of the little community were Zerubbabel and Joshua, who had come with an early group of Babylonian Hebrews, but the real initiative was with the two native

prophets. Their brief oracles [19] afford an interesting picture of the discouraging situation, and the patriotic efforts made by them to carry through the enterprise.

A still later and perhaps a still more depressing view of conditions is afforded by the little book of Malachi. The reign of Darius I (521–485 B.C.), who had only just secured his throne in the days of Haggai and Zechariah, was followed by that of Xerxes I (485–464 B.C.), the Ahashuerus of the book of Esther and the leader of the disastrous expedition into Greece. The aspirations of the Judeans to political power apparently led to the suppression of the line of David and the substitution of a Persian governor for the native prince. Though the temple was completed, most of the ancient site of Jerusalem was still covered with ruins, and the walls were dismantled, as they had been left by Nebuchadrezzar in 586 B.C. This is the situation made evident by the book of Malachi. The people are very poor and deeply disheartened. They are forgetting the law and their duties. The worship at the temple is slack and indifferent. Only repentance and amendment of life can bring prosperity. The book closes with the warning that an Elijah may be expected soon who will fearlessly set things right and bring the evil to judgment. Thus the Old Testament comes to an end with words of stern severity toward the negligent and the scorners, but of warm commendation for the righteous who still keep the Mosaic commandments.

Somewhere in this later period the books of Joel and Jonah are to be placed. The former was a lesson drawn from a locust plague that devastated the land. This is re-

[19] Hag. 1, 2 and Zech. 1–8.

garded by the prophet as the harbinger of a more sinister visitation by a mysterious enemy that shall waste the country. Only repentance can avert the danger. In such a time of peril Jahveh is roused to aid his people. He promises relief. The locust plague is to be dispersed, the enemy shall be driven away, the land shall again be fruitful, and the greater blessing of the outpoured Spirit of God shall be realized. The restoration of the still scattered Hebrews to their native land is to be completed, while the nations that have wasted Israel are to be overthrown. The emphasis of the book is upon the bright future of the redeemed and purified people and the destruction of those that have wrought their ill fortune. The book of Jonah is a prophetic answer to the narrower nationalism of Ezekiel, Joel and Esther. Its date falls in this late period.*

The final stage of this prophetic movement, in which the true prophetic spirit has practically disappeared, is found in the late apocalyptic portions of the Old Testament, such as the third part of the book of Isaiah,[20] the last two sections of the book of Zechariah,[21] Isaiah 13, 14 and 24–27, and the representative apocalypse of the Old Testament, the book of Daniel.†

It is thus seen that prophecy in Israel described something of a curve, ascending with the early seers from Samuel to Elisha, reaching its culmination in the great prophets of the Assyrian and Babylonian periods, such as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah and the Second Isaiah, and declining

* It is discussed among the biblical romances (chapter VII).
† See chapter VIII.
[20] Isa. 56–66; [21] Zech. 9–11 and 12–14.

from the time of Ezekiel to its final extinction in scribism and apocalypse. But the ideals of the great prophets were never lost, even after their voices were hushed. Their messages were repeated from generation to generation, and when once more the spirit of prophecy emerged in John the Baptist, and supremely in Jesus, it was back to these master teachers of an earlier age that the new prophets reverted for the basis and motive of their words of warning and hope.

V

PRIESTLY ACTIVITIES AND LITERATURE

Of the three teaching orders in Israel, the prophets, the priests and the wise men or sages, the second probably came nearer the life of the people than either of the others. The priests were an order of village pastors and had charge of the local sanctuaries, the high places that in earlier times played so important a part in the community life, and later fell into disrepute.

The functions of the priests were various. They ministered at the sanctuaries by attending to the sacrifices when people came bringing their offerings and partook of the sacrificial meals.[1] They gave instructions in the name of God. They divined for those who asked for counsel, either by the use of the ephod, a priestly garment or a divining image,[2] or by what was known as Urim and Thummim, a form of inquiry by means of a magic stone.[3] They acted as health officers when there were persons brought for their inspection.[4] It was natural that the instructions of the priests at the sanctuaries should grow into a body of institutes or laws, and from the days of Moses onward there gradually took form, usually in his name, the rules and regulations of

[1] 1 Sam. 1:3–5; [2] Gen. 25:22; 1 Sam. 14:3, 18, 19; [3] Num. 27:21; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65; [4] Lev. 13:1–3, 47–49.

this order of men. These were the laws of Israel, and they were generally called the laws of Moses.

The development of the priesthood in Israel was an interesting process, as among other ancient people. At the first every man was priest in his own family. The classic illustration of the earlier steps in the growth of this order is found in the seventeenth chapter of the book of Judges. Micah a householder of the tribe of Ephraim decided with his mother to use a bit of money that they wished to put to a good service in the making of a couple of images for worship, probably a figure of Jahveh the national deity, and a likeness of the family ancestor. The man, who was naturally the priestly head of the family, decided to make one of his sons the family priest. All this was evidently regarded as quite proper and exemplary. There was apparently no prejudice against the use of images, ephod or teraphim, nor did any man need be a Levite in order to function as a priest.

One day along came a young man from the south, who made himself known to Micah as a Levite out of a job, and the householder employed him at a satisfactory wage to be his priest. Probably this was the manner in which in many places the Levites came to be given such places. They belonged to the tribe of Moses. Perhaps they were not numerous enough to obtain a tribal territory at the time the other tribes came into the land, or were reduced in numbers in feuds with the Canaanites.* They were a sort of poor relation, landless, and to a large degree mendicants. It seems to have become the custom among the people to provide for

* Gen. 49:5–7; cf. Gen. 34:1–31, probably a folk-story based upon early tribal animosities.

them out of consideration for their great tribesman, the former leader of the nation, and their present unsecured condition. Gradually this custom became established to the extent that their service as priests became general, but not obligatory. In the earliest code of law * they were not mentioned. But by the time the Deuteronomic code took form, it was declared that none but Levites could minister as priests, and that all Levites were potentially of this order. As a still further development of the priestly estate, the late Priest Code of Ezra's day limited the priesthood to a particular clan in the tribe and reduced the remaining Levites to the rank of temple servants. The later recognition of the Levites as the sole members of the priestly class was emphasized by the tradition that in the days of Moses that tribe was selected for this service by the miraculous sign of the budding rod of Aaron,[5] and their functions are recorded in a late hymn of the tribes of Northern Israel, put by the authors of Deuteronomy into the mouth of Moses.[6] Here the services of the Levitical priests consist in divining by Urim and Thummim, teaching the people the law of God, and officiating in the offerings of incense and burnt sacrifices.

Equally instructive is the manner in which the priestly group enhanced its own importance by narratives regarding the sacredness and fearsomeness of the sanctuaries and the ark,[7] and at the same time augmented its own income from priestly ministries. At the first, in the period after the serv-

* Exod. 34:17–26 = "J"; Exod. 20:1–23:19 = "E."

[5] Num. 17:1–11; [6] Deut. 33:8–11; [7] 1 Sam. 5, and especially 6:19 and 2 Sam. 6:6, 7.

ices of priests at the sanctuaries became recognized, there was no stated compensation for their work. The people who came to offer their sacrifices gave to the priest and his helpers whatever they chose, in addition to the parts of the sacrificial carcass that could not be taken away.* The blood was poured out as a libation upon or beside the altar,[8] the fat was burned upon it as God's portion,[9] and the edible parts, boiled in the kettles kept for that purpose, were distributed by the worshiper to his family.† At the same time he would give the priest or his helper whatever part of the offering he chose as a tip or gratuity. This custom did not satisfy the priests. It left too much to the inclination of the worshiper. The next step planned was the thrusting of a fork into the seething kettle, so that whatever came up was the portion of the priest. It was literally "pot luck." It might mean much or little, a desirable or a scanty joint.[10] Something more certain was wanted. So the next demand

* Sacrifice was evidently the survival and development of various primitive customs, all of which had for their object the gaining of the friendship, favor and protection of deity. (1) One was the sacrificial meal, in which God was regarded as a commensal, a fellow guest, and offered the best of the ceremonial food. (2) In some instances the sacrifice was a survival of and compromise with the early custom of human sacrifice, in which an animal was substituted for the human victim, a child or slave. In Israel's earliest code of law it is definitely stipulated that all the first-born of men and beasts belonged to God, i.e., were to be devoted or sacrificed. Doubtless this was regularly the practice of pre-Hebrew times, and still survived in certain instances (Judg. 11:34–40). But even the earliest embodiment of formal law in Israel provided for the redemption of sons by payment of money or some form of substitution, and the later teachers sternly forbade the practice (Exod. 34:20). (3) In other cases the eating of the meat of an animal sacred to deity was believed to impart to the worshiper the qualities of power and cunning possessed by the god. This is also the principle underlying certain forms of cannabalism, i.e., by devouring the flesh of an enemy killed in conflict, something of his strength and skill is gained.

† Blood and fat as the two things devoted to deity were tabu to the people.

[8] Deut. 12:16, 23, 24; [9] 1 Sam. 2:16; [10] Sam. 2:13, 14.

was a portion of the meat raw, before it was put into the kettle to boil. This was an innovation that was resented by the people. Their interest was in the sacrifice as a means of communion with God and of securing his favor. The sprinkling of the blood and the burning of the fat were to them the significant parts of the ritual. Then the sacrificial meal would follow. But in some instances at least the priestly attendant was too intent upon his gratuity to wait, and he demanded it at once, threatening to take it by force. Such conduct was regarded as a scandal and made men lose their respect for the worship.[11]

But this was only a modest demand in the light of later usage. When the Deuteronomic law was issued it made a stipulated provision for the priests, by giving them a liberal portion of every offering,[12] and the later Priest Code still further augmented their perquisites.[13] In the days of Nehemiah a poll tax was collected for the service of the sanctuary.[14] In the times of Jesus in addition to these designated donations to the priests, there was a money payment to be made in connection with offerings. In the light of these facts the growth of the priestly group in numbers, in exclusiveness, in sanctity and in possessions is easily understood. Like all priesthoods it enjoyed opportunities for the promotion of its privileges that fell neither to the prophets nor the sages. It is evident that in the eyes of men so favored by circumstances and growing tradition, the elevation of people from the common ranks to the priesthood without warrant of custom or even of apology was regarded as nothing

[11] 1 Sam. 2:15–17; [12] Deut. 18:3–5; [13] Lev. 7:31–34; [14] Neh. 10:33.

short of sacrilege. Such was the sin charged against Jeroboam the rebel king of the northern tribes.[15]

Meantime, the temple was built by Solomon after designs already prepared and with materials already assembled by David. Its effect on the religious life of the people was almost immediately felt. It greatly enhanced the glory of the national religion at the capital, but it served as a magnet to draw the priests from the local communities where they were most needed to the central sanctuary. Perhaps this was what Nathan had feared when he dissuaded David from his plan to build a temple.* Solomon, more interested in the beautification of his capital and less sensitive to the advice of the prophets, proceeded with the enterprise. And the result was inevitable. The local sanctuaries or "high places," now abandoned by the priests seeking the more congenial atmosphere of the temple at Jerusalem, came increasingly under the influence of the heathenisms of neighboring peoples. From that time on they became a menace rather than an aid to the worship of Jahveh. The prophets regarded them with growing aversion. Idolatry was openly introduced in the leading sanctuaries of the north. The priests put in charge of them by Jeroboam and his successors were untrained and unfit for their task. Henceforth the prophets insisted that the high places ought to be suppressed, and held against even the best kings of the surviving Judean line the reproach that they did not destroy these centers of evil.[16] It was not until Hezekiah's time (715–686 B.C.) that a real

* Read the entire account in 2 Sam. 7, and notice the tact and diplomacy with which the prophet turned the king from his contemplated project.

[15] 1 Kings 12:31; 13:33, 34; [16] 1 Kings 15:14; 22:43; 2 Kings 12:3.

effort was made to exterminate the village shrines;[17] and, though some of them were restored by his idolatrous son Manasseh,[18] a definite beginning at reform had been made, a beginning which was drastically carried out by Josiah in the great reformation, after the discovery of the law book with its strict prohibition of any but a central sanctuary.[19]

The development of the priestly laws kept pace with the growth of the priestly order. At first these were very simple. The successive documents which appear in the Hexateuch, the first six books of the Old Testament, contain each of them bodies of law advancing in extent and significance as the nation expanded in numbers and culture. The oldest of these documents, the Judean, or "J" source, has a comparatively modest code of laws, suited to a rural and even nomadic state of society. This is found in Exodus 34:17–26, and is distinctly stated to have been the ten commandments written by Moses at the divine dictation.* They are quite different from the ten commandments that have become familiar alike to the church and the synagogue. They begin with the prohibition of molten images in worship, and proceed through the items of the seven days feast of unleavened bread, the demand that all first-born children and ani-

* The Hebrew records waver between the statement that Moses wrote the words of the law (Exod. 24:4; 34:28; Deut. 31:24) and insistence upon the fact that Jahveh himself wrote them (Exod. 34:12, 18 "written with the finger of God," 32:16, "the writing of God," 34:1; Deut. 5:22; 10:2, 4). This was in harmony with the early beliefs of the nations that their laws, the result of custom and the organization of tribal morality, were the bestowment of deity. Hammurabi claims that he received his code from his god, and the scene on the stele on which they are recorded shows the king in the act of accepting the code from Shamash. The varying traditions regarding the writing of the Mosaic institutes indicate the different sources of the material.

[17] 2 Kings 18:4; [18] 2 Kings 21:3; [19] 2 Kings 22, 23:1–20.

mals shall be devoted to God, the requirement of a gift on appearance at the sanctuary, the seventh day of rest, the feast of weeks and of the ingathering, the threefold appearance annually of all men before Jahveh, the prohibition of leaven with the sacrifices, the presentation of the first fruits of the land at the sanctuary, and close with the curious prohibition of the superstitious custom of boiling a kid in its mother's milk. These laws must have taken form as early as 850 B.C., the date usually assigned to this document, and they may have been much earlier. Their ascription to the age and the agency of Moses was in keeping with the uniform Hebrew tradition regarding their revered leader and teacher.*

The second code of laws to issue from the priestly activity in Israel was contained in the Ephraimite or "E" document, dating from about 750 B.C., and found in Exodus 20–23. This material took form near the time of Amos and Hosea and is much more suitable to the developing urban life of that age. Its center and nucleus is found in the ten commandments in their common form, quite different from the earlier pattern of the "J" document. And yet they are

* The relation between the forms of Hebrew law and the code of King Hammurabi of Babylon (about 2250 B.C., fully a thousand years before Moses and the Exodus) is not fully known. Behind the Hebrews on their arrival in Canaan about 1250 B.C., there lay long stretches of Semitic law of a highly organized type, to say nothing of Egyptian legislation with which they had come into contact, and Midianite legal practices (Exod. 18). The code of Hammurabi is more elaborate than the combined codes of Israel. It included (1) an introduction on evidence and decisions; (2) the laws relating to property, personal and real, and to trade; and (3) laws relating to persons, family, injuries, labor and laborers. In general the Babylonian code disclosed a more highly developed social and industrial state than the Hebrew laws. The chief difference consists in the interest of the former in trade, commerce, industry and the secular arts, and the latter in ethical and humanitarian ideas. Both, of course, contain a considerable amount of liturgical and ceremonial direction.

just as explicitly declared to be the commandments of God to the people; they are said to have been written by the finger of God on the two tablets of stone.[20] This version of the commandments is divided into two sections, the first dealing with duties to God,[21] and the second with duties to one's fellow-men.[22] The advance over the laws of Exodus 34 is to be seen not only in this version of the commandments, but in the remainder of the laws in the four chapters which form the matrix of the decalogue. These are well adapted to the changing social order in the times of the first of the writing prophets. These two bodies of law and tradition, the "J" and the "E," were apparently combined into one, generally known as "JE," about 650 B.C., and these laws constituting what is known as the "Book of the Covenant"[23] are the first formal legal documents contained in the Old Testament.

The third output of the law-making activity in Israel has a romantic interest for the student of the Old Testament. The Book of the Covenant appears to have met the needs of the people for some generations. The days of the prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah came and passed. The reign of Hezekiah, the reformer and friend of Isaiah, gave place to that of Manasseh who turned from the worship of Jahveh and set up the abominations of heathenism in Jerusalem. His long reign of a half century was a time of trouble for the prophets and priests of the orthodox group. Hardly a voice was lifted in behalf of the prophetic ideals. The sanctuaries all over the country declined from the cus-

[20] Exod. 20:1; cf. Deut. 5:22; [21] Exod. 20:3–11; [22] Exod. 20:12–17; [23] Exod. 20–23, 34.

tomary worship to idolatrous customs brought in from neighboring lands.

The danger to the religion of Jahveh and to the morals of the people from this relapse into the pagan cults of the outer world pressed upon the spirits of the faithful among the priests and prophets who escaped persecution. The need of the time was a new law, limiting worship to a central sanctuary where the priestly ministry could be controlled by legitimate oversight, and the dangers of a heathen cultus could be resisted. Evidently such a work was undertaken. But the long reign of Manasseh prevented any effort to inaugurate the reforms for which the new law, the expansion and reshaping of the Book of the Covenant, prepared the way. The generation that formulated the fresh code was passing away, and the only plan that appeared practicable was to deposit the document in the temple to await a more opportune day.

That day came in the providence of God during the reign of the pious king Josiah (639–609 B.C.). In the eighteenth year of his reign certain repairs were undertaken in the temple at Jerusalem. In the process of their execution a roll of law was discovered, which brought surprise and consternation to the king and all his court, including Hilkiah the head of the priestly order.* This book forbade many of the practices which had become customary in the land, such as the worship at various sanctuaries and the employ-

* 2 Kings 22; This narrative includes the first reference in the Old Testament to a "high priest." Such a functionary was apparently unknown before, and even here it may be an editorial addition from the later age of the Priest Code when the hierarchy of temple ministers was more elaborately developed (Lev. 21:10, etc.).

ment of priests not of the strictly Levitical order. Particularly urgent were the prohibitions of the book in reference to all idolatrous practices and associations. The king at once summoned a convocation of the people and had the new document read in their hearing and adopted as the law of the state. On the basis of this body of institutes, which purported to be the work of Moses, and therefore ancient, a drastic reform was instituted and carried out through the land from end to end.[24] A covenant was made with God, and this "book of the covenant," as the new law was called, was made sacred and obligatory as the embodiment of the divine will. It was probably the earliest portion of the Old Testament to be publicly recognized as canonical, a writing that could be called holy scripture.

In comparing the description of this discovery and the steps that were taken in carrying out its injunctions with the historical narratives of the Old Testament, biblical scholars have found reason to adopt the view that the book thus found was the essential section of our book of Deuteronomy, particularly the body of laws contained in that remarkable work.[25] It is one of the most interesting volumes in the Old Testament. It purports to come from Moses in its entirety. Its earlier portion is a recital of the story of the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, put into the mouth of Moses as an address delivered to the tribes shortly before his death,[26] and it may well contain reminiscences of the words of that great leader. Then follows the introduction to the code of law which is the central purpose of the book,[27]

[24] 2 Kings 23; [25] Deut. 12–26; [26] Deut. 1–4; [27] Deut. 5–11.

and in this section the ten commandments are repeated in almost the exact form in which they are given in the "E" document of Exodus 20.[28]

Then comes the code itself, with its many expansions and revisions of the ancient Book of the Covenant, of Exodus 20–23 and 34, the laws of "JE." Careful comparison makes it quite evident that while they are based upon the same general principles of religious instruction, they differ radically in their injunctions, and there was ample cause for the surprise and alarm of Josiah and his advisers upon their discovery. The last portion of the book is devoted to urgent admonitions regarding the observance of the commands of the code, with threats in case of disobedience, and rewards for fidelity;[29] and it closes with the two poems, the "Song" and the "Blessing of Moses," and the account of his last days and death.[30]

The unknown priests and prophets of the dark days of Manasseh used well the material at their disposal, instituting such reforms as could alone save the state from religious collapse, and employing everywhere the name of the revered Moses, whom they felt they were reinterpreting to the nation in the new emergency, and whose authority alone could validate the new legislation. The success of that reform which began with the discovery of the roll in 621 B.C. was complete for a time. The feast of the Passover was kept in accordance with the Deuteronomic rules,[31] the local sanctuaries were abolished, and worship was restricted to the temple in Jerusalem. The unfortunate death of the king however

[28] Deut. 5:6–21; [29] Deut. 27–31; [30] Deut. 32–34; [31] 2 Kings 23:21–23; cf. Deut. 16:1–8.

either in parley or battle with Necho, the pharaoh of Egypt, at Megiddo,[32] put an end to all the hopes of the reforming party and invited that decline in statesmanship and religion which brought on the catastrophes of 597 and 586 B.C., the siege and the destruction of the capital and a further stage in the great dispersion that began with the overthrow of the northern kingdom a century and a half before. The laws of Deuteronomy were well adapted to the age but they came too late to save the nation.

Nevertheless they were the accepted norm of conduct and the model for the worship if only there had been any temple left. Their application to personal, domestic and community life was accepted and enforced to some extent by the scattered remnants of the people in Palestine, Babylonia and Egypt. Without a central government to claim their loyalty however, the inroads of heathenism were constant and disastrous. Those who were faithful to the teachings of the past were few as compared with those who relapsed. Ezekiel, a prophet of priestly training, one of the exiles in the town of Tel-abib in southern Babylonia, undertook to keep his fellow exiles true to the law of God, and projected a revised law based on Deuteronomy but expanded in its liturgical demands, much as Deuteronomy had been an expansion of the older Book of the Covenant. His code of law [33] was based upon an ideal reconstruction of Jerusalem to follow the return to the holy city and the reorganization of the land and the nation. This code (c. 572 B.C.) never came into actual use, but it showed the direction in which consecrated men were working in the surviving Hebrew

[32] 2 Kings 23:29, 30; [33] Ezek. 40–48.

communities to keep alive their religion and to prepare for better times.

About 397 B.C. one of these Hebrew teachers, a scribe named Ezra brought to Jerusalem from the east a copy of a new and still more expanded law based on Deuteronomy but much more elaborate in its regulations.[34] This was the Priest Code, the most extensive of all the codes developed during the history of Old Testament times. It is found in the latter half of the book of Exodus, in Leviticus and Numbers. It is much more detailed and exact in its specifications regarding the priestly order and its ministries. Soon afterwards the narrative portions of the priestly document, or "P," were written, such as the account of creation in Genesis 1, and presently (probably about 250 B.C.) the entire body of priestly writing was compiled in a collection which the Jews called the Torah, and which later generations came to call the Pentateuch and attributed entire to the hand of Moses.

In addition to these priestly institutes or laws, there was also prepared a body of priestly narratives of the past, the books of Chronicles, with their supplemental material in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These record many of the events of the earlier history, parallel to the prophetic records in Samuel and Kings, but in the priestly spirit and with particular emphasis upon the liturgical, ceremonial and ecclesiastical features of the national experience. These books are among the latest in the Old Testament, bringing the story down to the times of Alexander the Great.*

* Jaddua (Neh. 12:11) was in office at the time of the visit of Alexander the Great to Jerusalem in 331 B.C.

[34] Ezra 7:1–10, 14, 25.

It will thus be seen that the priestly laws of Israel, far from being the product of a single mind or the output of one age, were a gradual development and took new and expanded forms as occasion required. Probably at the first they were passed about in oral form. Writing was a difficult and little practiced art. Perhaps the decalogues, the favorite form of primitive laws, were the first to be written and their commitment to writing was the result of their frequent repetition. Writing came into more common use with the downfall of the Hebrew state at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. The scattered groups of Hebrews needed some means of communication. Written records of past national events were needed. Men of priestly training now that the temple was no more turned to scribal activity and commentation upon the law. Out of this as time passed grew the great body of discussion and revision known as the Talmud, the sacred book of Judaism. The Hebrew state was no more. The Hebrew race passed away with its classic tongue. The new age brought into being the Jewish synagogue, with a new speech, a new form of religion, and a new literature.

The laws of Israel passed through the inevitable stages of the nation's changing life. At first there were the nomadic laws of the desert experiences and the first years in Canaan. Then there came the early agricultural age, the period during which the native Canaanite population was being absorbed with its speech, its customs, its arts, and not a little of its religion. That may have lasted until the times of Ahab, about 875 B.C. Then came the prophetic period from the days of Amos to the end of the Hebrew

state, the age of the ethical, humanitarian and spiritual teachings of the great prophets. This gave place in the days of the great dispersion to the development of philosophy, speculation, liturgical and ceremonial features of a growing ecclesiastical institution, and the end of the period witnessed the close of the Old Testament canon.

From that time onward there took form the development of the oral law, the schools of the scribes, the rise and expansion of Judaism, and the final phase of legal commentation in the Mishnah and the Gamara. By that time two rival faiths, Christianity and Judaism, were competing for their respective interpretations of the teachings of the Old Testament.

VI

THE SAGES AND THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Of the various orders of teachers among the Hebrews, the prophets, the priests and the sages, the last were the least conspicuous, and the writings preserved from their hands the fewest in number. Yet they were not without importance in the ethical and intellectual life of the nation. Among them were teachers in such schools as took form, perhaps suggested at first by the schools of the prophets. Others of them were counselors who gave advice on subjects of interest to their clients. In this regard one of their functions was much like that of the modern attorney. They were usually found in the gates of the cities, where people gathered for barter and conversation.

The Hebrews can hardly be said to have had a formal philosophy, but the problems of experience came up for reflective consideration, and the sages were the men most likely to be interested in such discussions. They were the humanists of the time. They were less interested in the matters of ritual than the priests, or in the preaching of religion than the prophets. They were less nationalistic than either of these orders. Their horizons were broader than the land of Palestine. The things that stimulated their thought were the common experiences of mankind, the questions of good and evil, success and failure. Perhaps

this was as near to a philosophy as Israel ever came during the classic age. They were the men whose utterances provoked their hearers to reflection. "The words of the wise are as goads," said one of their number; and in commenting on the value of the groups of proverbs which they gathered and taught, he added, "collections which are given by one teacher are like nails driven with a sledge." [1]

Probably it was in the making and teaching of proverbs, bits of truth attractive in form and valuable in substance, that these men had their chief value. Proverbs have been defined as the wit of one man and the wisdom of many. As matter of fact they do not come from any one source, but are the result of daily contact with affairs, and make their impression because of the attractive form in which they are expressed. They are like pebbles that are smoothed by being passed about. Such bits of wit and wisdom appealed to the wise and were gathered up by them for purposes of teaching. Out of such interest came the collections which went to make up the book of Proverbs. Its form shows that it was assembled in different bundles of sayings, and at last put together into one volume. This book is the primary and in some regards the most characteristic body of the wisdom writings. It contains an immense number of suggestive reflections upon life. It is a manual of sensible conduct. It must have had large influence over the behavior of all classes. It has been found of high educational value in all the centuries since it was published.

Most nations have had their wise men, from whom they received, or to whom they ascribed, their best interpre-

[1] Eccl. 12:11.

tations of life. Such sages are to be encountered in the pages of history all the way from Confucius to Benjamin Franklin. Among the Hebrews, Solomon held this place. Tradition affirmed that he was a shrewd observer of nature, a discerning judge of human motives, a poet of skill, and a maker of proverbs.[2] For this reason there grew up the tradition that he was the author of the entire anthology of proverbs, and the book has usually borne the title of the Proverbs of Solomon. In this regard the relation of the wise king to the book would be much like that of Moses to the various codes of law, or of David to the Psalms, the relation of a common denominator or ideal oracle rather than of an author.

Of the different collections of brief and sententious sayings of which the book is composed, perhaps the oldest is that found in chapters 25–29. These are given the title of the Proverbs of Solomon edited by the Scribes of King Hezekiah. Second in point of age would seem to be the list included in chapters 10:1–22:16, which are called the Proverbs of Solomon. Then there follows a wisdom epistle called the Words of the Wise,[3] to which there is appended a postscript, with the heading, These also are the Sayings of the Wise.[4] Probably at this stage of the editorial process the first nine chapters of the book were composed as an introduction, with their personifications of Wisdom and Folly as the contrasted beings who invite men respectively to good and evil. In the age in which the Proverbs were finally edited and put into their present form, "Folly" might well stand to the wise of Israel as the term

[2] 1 Kings 4:29–34; [3] Prov. 22:17–24:22; [4] Prov. 24:23–34.

for the new Greek speculations intruding into Palestine, and "Wisdom" for the older, more conservative and orthodox ways of thinking. Later still there were appended the three fragments, the Words of Agur,[5] the Words of King Lemuel,[6] and the acrostic poem in praise of the Perfect Woman.[7]

In form the proverbs are mostly couplets, in which the second line reinforces the first by repeating the sentiment in other words, or by presenting a contrast or alternative, or by adding a fresh idea. For the most part the proverbs are held together rather by similarity of form than by sequence of ideas. Except in the few instances where a cluster of such sayings is devoted to a single thought, there is no connection discoverable. They could be given a different order without loss of value. Aside from the single couplet form, one finds epigrams, sonnets and proverb clusters. Among the most interesting of these slightly longer examples are the number sonnets, or riddle proverbs, that must have been the means both of instruction and amusement.[8]

Among the many subjects which engaged the attention of the wise, and found pungent comment in their proverbs, were indolence, intemperance, lust, suretyship, anger, hasty speech, thoughtlessness, lack of respect for age and authority, and the corresponding virtues which they commended.

By far the greatest of the works produced by the sages of Israel was the book of Job. It holds an enduring place among the world's masterpieces of literature. Its theme is the problem of suffering, the age-old inquiry as to why good

[5] Prov. 30; [6] Prov. 31:1–9; [7] Prov. 31:10–31; [8] Prov. 30:15–31.

people are so frequently the victims of evil fortune. If the world is the domain of righteous government, and if an omnipotent God is ruling in love, why should there be such tragedies of suffering where no corresponding guilt is apparent? This problem was not confined to Israel. It is universal in human experience. But it became more acute among the Hebrews in the days when their national career was destroyed by the overthrow of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and the continuity of their clan and family life was ruined by dispersion.

The sages must have had many things to say to inquirers on this difficult theme. But the most impressive of their messages is found in this book of Job. There is no hint given as to its authorship. It is one of a number of books in both the Old Testament and the New whose writers are unknown. The book of Job was not even attributed to Solomon, which seems strange, in consideration of the fact that most of the wisdom material was credited to him. The author, or authors, of the book made use of an old tradition about a certain Job who though a man of piety and wisdom suffered a series of unaccountable misfortunes. He was classed with other worthies of ancient days like Noah and Daniel, by Ezekiel, who wrote many years before the date of the book.[9] There are various indications that the work is not literal history, though it probably has a foundation of fact.

The volume falls into five sections, of which the first and last are in prose, the remainder in poetry. In the prologue[10] the stage is set for the drama which is to be

[9] Ezek. 14:14, 20; [10] Job 1, 2.

enacted, and in interviews between God and the Satan or official who is responsible for Job's district, it is decided that the question of the piety and disinterested devotion of this good man shall be tested by a series of losses that strip him of his property and culminate in his complete social and physical ruin. He stands the tests, and, quite unaware of the reason for his tragic fate, maintains his faith in God. His three friends who hold unwaveringly to the orthodoxy of the time, come to comfort him, but at the same time are convinced that he must have been guilty of some great sin or he would not be reduced to his pitiful condition. The body of the book is taken up with the great debate between Job, who insists on his integrity, and the friends who attempt to convert him to their view and induce him to confess his sin and secure forgiveness.[11]

When the debate with its three cycles of speeches has come to an end, a bystander, Elihu, takes up the discussion, without, however, adding greatly to its value, or reaching any clear conclusion. Neither Job nor his friends pay any serious heed to this new disputant.[12] But the Voice of the Lord breaks in upon them from the midst of a storm and brings the controversy to its close, not by giving an answer to the problem of evil, but by widening the scope of the debate to include the vast field of good, in comparison with which evil has but a limited place in the world.[13] The book ends with the prose epilogue in which Job is commended for his audacity in questioning the ways of Providence, and thus laying the foundation for a firmer faith. Obviously the book of Job is not the final answer

[11] Job 3–31; [12] Job 32–37; [13] Job 38–41.

to the problem of suffering. It is not even the best answer that the Old Testament offers. For that answer one must look to the prophets and to the New Testament. But the book provides an important contribution to the subject, and in the process furnishes some of the noblest poetry to be found in any language.

The book of Ecclesiastes is the third contribution from the schools of the sages to the literature of the Old Testament. It provides the reader with two serious questions at the very start. One is, why a book that is so manifestly heterodox and unchurchly should bear the almost clerical name by which it is known. The other is, how a book so pessimistic and skeptical ever got into the canon of holy Scripture. The first is easily answered. The title is a bad translation of the Hebrew word Koheleth, which means not a preacher or ecclesiastic in any sense, but a teacher, a summoner of groups of students, the master of a school. The second question is not so easy to answer. Perhaps it was thought by the editors who gathered the books of the Old Testament into a canon or authenticated list that because the book was written in Hebrew it should be included. Or it may be they believed that the negative utterances in it were sufficiently answered by its more positive words. At all events, the book is in the biblical collection, and forms a masterful if not a fully conclusive contribution to the debates of the wise.

It presents a point of view much in vogue during the late days of the Greek period in Palestine. It represents a school of thought which had largely lost its grip on the essentials of the national faith. It is thoroughly pessimistic

throughout. In a world as bad as this, what is to be done to make life decently tolerable? In order to make his argument a little more vivid and personal, the author assumes the character of the ancient king Solomon, and proceeds from his point of view to discuss the various ways in which satisfaction might be attained. After picturing the experiments that a king might try in the search for happiness, he dismisses them all, and with them the mask of Solomon, and concludes that all is in vain. Life is at best a circle in which there is nothing new or of value. The best that can be done is to accept the inevitable, avoid excess, be content with what one has, and prepare for the end. There is no encouragement to the life of the voluptuary, for that misses the very satisfactions which the habits of self-restraint secure. But there is nothing else to be hoped. Death ends all, and the current speculations in that field are futile. Along the way the author gathers up many gems of wisdom, after the manner of his class. His comments on the social order of his time are caustic and revealing. The final chapter, on the coming of old age, is one of the most beautiful in the Bible. The conclusion of the entire discussion is, Fear God and live according to his laws. This is all there is of life. For God brings everything to the test of values day by day, whether good or evil. Of course the answer to such a negative work as Koheleth is to be found in the great affirmations of the books of faith like Deuteronomy, Isaiah, the Psalms and the late work known as the Wisdom of Solomon. They will always have the final word in the auditing of the moral values of the Old Testament.

If the lovely little book of Canticles, the Song of Songs, be regarded as a drama, as some biblical students have regarded it, it would fall to the collection of the wisdom books, as the discussion of the problem of human love; the question whether there is a quality of love between man and woman so strong and pure that flattery cannot seduce it and gold cannot buy it. Arranged in dramatic form, the book yields this meaning and presents in dim outline the story of a maiden whom king Solomon sought to win from her lover by the seductions and luxuries of the court, only to find her impregnable to his flatteries and desirous only of returning to her rustic betrothed. Most modern critics however regard the book as a collection of charming love songs, perhaps intended for use at wedding feasts.

There were later books of the general type of the wisdom literature which are not included in the canon of the Old Testament, but are found in the apocrypha. They are closely related to those already named, but differ chiefly in the fact that they were written in Greek rather than Hebrew. Perhaps for this reason they were deemed unsuitable for embodiment in the collection of Scripture. These books are the so-called Wisdom of Solomon, a pseudonymous work of the first half of the first century B.C., and the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, commonly known as Ecclesiasticus. The former received its name from the fact that, like the book of Proverbs, it lays claim in several places to Solomonic authorship. Its later character is apparent however. Its purpose is to affirm the wisdom of God as embodied in the Jewish religion; and in its loyalty to the faith and institutions of Israel it affords,

whether consciously or otherwise, an answer and corrective to the doubt and pessimism of Ecclesiastes. In its emphasis upon the essentials of religion, and its encouragement to the faithful in the midst of opposition from the hellenizing spirit of the age, it is worthy of a place in the Old Testament canon, and of the study of students of the Scriptures.

The other book, the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, was originally written in Hebrew, but was translated into Greek by the author's grandson, who wrote an introduction in which he said that his grandfather, having given himself much to the reading of "the law and the prophets and the other books" (the popular threefold classification of the Old Testament in the late pre-Christian centuries), was led to write "somewhat pertaining to instruction and wisdom," in order that those who love learning might make better progress by living according to the law. The Hebrew original was all but lost for many centuries, and the Greek translation afforded the only knowledge of the work. But in 1896 a portion of the Hebrew text was discovered, and since that time thirty-nine of the fifty-one chapters have been recovered. Like Proverbs it treats of many themes in the style of the wisdom writings, and deals chiefly with the problems of daily life encountered by people of all classes. It contains a rich store of ethical and religious counsel.

VII

THE PRAYERS AND PRAISES OF ISRAEL

An essential feature of all religious service is music. Much of this is instrumental and has been so since the days of reed pipe and tom-tom worship. From the simplest beginnings of musical performance up to the elaborate renderings of orchestra and organ, instruments have had an important part in the ritual of all the faiths.

But far more impressive has been the singing function in worship. The human voice, aided by musical devices of many sorts or quite without their help, has carried on the ministry of praise and prayer in all lands. And for the most part the words have been taken from the literature of devotion which occupies so large a place among the sacred writings of all systems of belief.

All the religions that have attained a measurable cultural level have produced hymns in celebration of their deities, and in the utterance of the sentiments inspired by their holy men. Much of the religious literature of antiquity consists of hymns. Among the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans there were gradually gathered collections of chants, invocations, poems of adoration and recitals in honor of the gods, confessions of sin and prayers for forgiveness and divine aid. The Vedic scriptures, the

classic literature of the early Aryans in India, were hymns in honor of the nature gods of their pantheon.

Because of the fact that the common element in all religious expression is worship of the Unseen and Eternal, it is natural that the hymns of faith among all races and in all lands should express the elemental sense of reverence and offer petition for the common needs. Whatever varieties of belief, ritual, or organization the various ethnic religious groups may disclose, in their formal worship and their use of hymns and chants they come very near one another, for they express the common sentiments of the devout life.

In the western world of Europe and America the chief work of devotion is the book of Psalms, the collection of prayers and praises composed by poets of the Hebrew race during several centuries, and gathered for the liturgical uses of the second temple in the sixth and succeeding centuries before the Christian era. In many ways this is the most impressive and influential hymn book in the history of religion. It is not strange therefore that to a notable degree the hymns of all the later and related faiths show its impress and reveal its spirit. And this is but to say that they all share the elemental values of that ancient spirit of worship and unite at that high level.

The most prized of all the sections of the Old Testament is this book of Psalms. While in the thought of the Hebrew people it did not possess that extraordinary sanctity which attached to the Torah, the five books of the law, yet it occupied a position of the highest regard with readers of the Scriptures, both in the Jewish and the early Christian

communities. It was the hymn book of the second temple, the one built under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, 520–516 B.C. From that time onward it took its place as the book of worship among the Hebrews of Old Testament times, the Jews in the Graeco-Roman world, and the Christians of the New Testament age. And it has been either the actual hymn collection or the chief source of the hymnology of all sections of Christendom.

Its high position in the esteem of the editors of the Old Testament is shown by the fact that it was placed at the head of the general division of the Writings of the Hebrew scriptures. The Jews divided the holy books into three groups, the Torah which included the five books of Moses, called the Pentateuch; the Nebiim, or Prophets, including the earlier and later works of that class; and the Kethubim, or Writings, the miscellaneous books left over from the first two divisions. At the head of the dozen books included in this section the book of Psalms was placed, and its name was usually applied to that entire group of writings. When Jesus spoke of the three parts of the Hebrew Scriptures he named them as "the law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." [1]

Like the hymns of all religions and all the centuries the psalms were composed by all kinds of people and through all the periods of the national history of Israel.*

* As in the case of the Vedic hymns, some of which were composed by poets at the behest of wealthy patrons of the shrines and were presented as votive offerings, so some of the psalms may have had a like professional origin, and served, like the altar paintings of the middle ages, as contributions to the worship of the sanctuary. Such a psalm as the 119th may have been a work of this vicarious and artistic type.

[1] Luke 24:44.

Some of them were as old as the time of David whose name is traditionally connected with the collection, and some of them show evidence of coming from the very late years of the pre-Christian age. Events occurring at various times through the Hebrew centuries are mentioned in the Psalms and make clear their relations to the national experiences. There was no special order or guild devoted to the making or compilation of psalms, as in the cases of the prophetic, priestly and wisdom writings. Yet since these hymns were employed in the worship at the temple it is probable that those groups of Levites particularly devoted to the service of the sanctuary had a larger part in the creation of the songs of worship than any other single class.[2] But the contents of the hymns show that they arose out of many different periods and many diverse kinds of experience.*

The book of Psalms as we have it includes one hundred and fifty poems. It is divided into five sections, perhaps after the analogy of the five books of the law. In the revised and modern speech versions of the Old Testament these divisions are marked off by separating spaces. The first division includes Psalms 1–41; the second, 42–72; the third, 73–89; the fourth, 90–106; the fifth, 107–150. Each of these

* It is not unlikely that in the early period the hymns were accompanied with dancing as a form of religious expression. The well-known instance of David's transfer of the ark to Jerusalem is an example (2 Sam. 6:14). Several of the psalms reveal the antiphonal form and other adaptations to the ballad dance and dramatic representation (Exod. 15:20; Judg. 5; 1 Sam. 18:6, 7; Ps. 2, 24, 118, etc.). It may be that there was an element of sympathetic magic in the dances and other posturings that accompanied various kinds of poetic recitation in the hope that these exercises might aid in the attainment of the worshiper's desires.

[2] 1 Chron. 25:1–8; cf. the superscriptions of Pss. 73–88.

divisions ends with a doxology which is not a part of the psalm but is the appropriate close of the section. These doxologies are usually marked by an Amen, a double Amen or Hallelujah (Praise ye Jahveh). Students of the book have been impressed by the fact that some of these divisions use predominantly the divine name Jahveh (Lord, as in the first section) and some the name Elohim (God, as in the second section). It is probable that the relative age of the various sections may be indicated in this manner.

Casual readers of the Psalms probably pay little attention to the superscriptions, the brief notes that in many cases follow the psalm numbers. Yet these notices are of real interest to the attentive reader. They undertake to give information regarding one or more of several features connected with the individual psalm or its use in the worship. Seventy-two of the hundred and fifty psalms are assigned in some manner to David. The words "to David," the usual form of this ascription, may mean that it was the belief of the editors who arranged the collection and wrote the superscription that David was the composer, or that the psalm was derived from some earlier collection that was ascribed "to David." The relation of David to the Psalter appears to have rested on the tradition of his early minstrelsy and his later interest in the service of the sanctuary.[3] His authorship of any considerable number of the psalms seems more than doubtful. As in the case of the relation of Moses to the law, and of Solomon to the wisdom books, so that of David to the psalms would seem to have been ideal and traditional rather than actual.

[3] 1 Sam. 16:14–23; 2 Sam. 6:1–5; Amos 6:5.

The superscriptions, which were not a part of the original psalms, and were indeed written in a later dialect, present the opinions of editors on various matters connected with the poems. Authorship is one of them. Another is the fact that many of the hymns were evidently copied from a collection labeled "the choirmaster's copy," or "to the chief musician." Other items recorded are the kind of instruments used for an accompaniment ("on stringed instruments," "on wind instruments"), or the kind of voices ("the maidens," "the eighth," octave, basses), or the name of the tune ("the stag at dawn," "the lily of testimony," or "do not destroy"). Others give an intimation as to the nature of the psalm, as a meditation, a prayer or a song. And quite a number, particularly in the earlier divisions, provide suggestions regarding the supposed origin of the poem or its use on special occasions.

The stanza structure of many of the psalms is obvious. In other instances it is emphasized by the word Selah which seems to have marked, at the places where it has survived, the end of stanzas where the voices paused and the instruments continued with an interlude. In other cases the stanzas are separated by refrains, as in Psalms 42–43, 46 and 136. In some instances the psalms are composed on an acrostic plan, the verses beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This arrangement is not evident in the ordinary English versions, except in the case of Psalm 119 where eight verses are devoted to each letter.*

* In *The Old Testament — an American Translation* by Professor J. M. P. Smith and others, such Psalms as 9, 10, 25, 34, 111, 112, and 145, as well as 119, are shown in their acrostic form.

The themes with which the psalms deal are many, covering the entire range of the religious life. Naturally the hymns of worship are the more numerous, as they would be likely to be in such a collection. Such great anthems of praise as 84, "How lovely are thy dwellings," 103, "Bless the Lord, O my soul," and others like 95, 96, 100 and 145 are unforgettable. The nature psalms reveal a great love of the outer world as the handiwork of God, and Psalms 8, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name," 19, "The heavens declare the glory of God," 29, the thunderstorm, and 104, the loveliness of Palestine, are examples of this sentiment. The entire extent of the national history was swept by the psalms, either in actual description or in editorial assignment. To Moses was traditionally credited Psalm 90, that hymn of the ages that has found its way into every ritual for the dead. Events all the way through the life of David, especially his war song,[4] were used as the nails on which psalms were hung by later tradition. The second Psalm seems to find its place at the time of the coronation of some young king in Zion. Psalm 45 is a beautiful wedding hymn in celebration of a royal marriage with a princess of Tyre. Psalms 46 and 48 are appropriate to such an event as the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib the Assyrian in 701 B.C. Psalms 42 and 43, which were apparently composed as one, tell of the departure of exiles across the spurs of Lebanon on their way toward the East, and 137 reveals their varied moods after arrival in the distant land. Something of the joy of return to Jerusalem and of

[4] Ps. 18; cf. 2 Sam. 22.

later journeys to the holy city is disclosed in the "Songs of Ascents," 120-134.*

Many different moods are expressed in these outpourings of human souls. In some there is the cry of distress, as in 6 and 22. Some like 32 and 51 express the feeling of penitence so earnestly that they have become the world's confessional. In some, such as 27, 34, 62, 63, and 91, the sentiment of trust in God reaches the sublimest levels to be found in any literature of devotion. In others, like 73, the problem of doubt and its solution are recorded. The fool's creed and the psalmist's comment upon it are the theme of 14 and its duplicate, 53. Reverence for such portions of the Scriptures as had taken form in the days of the psalmists is the topic of several of the hymns, notably 19:7–14 and 119. The ideal king is described in 72 and 110, psalms that have a more ideal and messianic significance than any rulers of David's line achieved. The upright man, the suitable citizen for the holy city, is described in 1, 15 and 24:1–6. Psalm 67 is often referred to as the missionary Psalm. And in 139, the hymn of the pursuing God — which reaches its climax in the paragraph beginning "Whither shall I go from thy spirit?" — the Psalter reaches its supreme utterance.†

The place of the Psalms in history is significant. Some of these immortal songs are associated forever with certain characters or episodes in the life of religion. Psalm 46 re-

* Various periods of the national history are reviewed in such poems as 78, 80, 81, 83, 105, 106, 107, 108 and 114, while such laments as 44, 74, and 79 may come from as late a period as the dark days of Syrian oppression.

† The poem, *The Hound of Heaven* by Francis Thompson is to a certain degree a paraphrase of this Psalm.

calls the name of Luther and is the basis of his well-known hymn, "Ein feste burg ist unser Gott." "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered," [5] was Cromwell's battle hymn. A turning point in the history of Europe, the defeat of the Turks besieging Vienna in 1683, was celebrated by the victorious John Sobieski, king of Poland, whose army chanted his battle song, "Non nobis, Domine." [6] When St. John of the Cross was dying, and was told by his friends that he had but a few hours of life, he repeated the words of Psalm 122, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." *

It would be interesting, of course, if we could know more about the original composers of the Psalms, and the circumstances in which they were first uttered. But this is impossible. The traditions regarding their authorship are only remote conjectures, excepting the possibility of David's connection with some few of them. But in this regard they share the anonymous estate of many other portions of the Bible, and must be valued not for any traditions of authorship, but for their own intrinsic worth. Whatever may have been their original creation, we prize them not alone for their native sentiments, but as well by reason of their freightage of the prayers and tears, the joys and sorrows of all the generations of suffering and rejoicing saints through whose souls they have passed and whose lives they have enriched. We need no history or commentation to make clear the meaning of such undying words as, "Create in

* See Prothero, *The Psalms in Human Life*, and Ker, *The Psalms in History and Biography*.

[5] Ps. 68; [6] Ps. 115.

me a clean heart, O God," or "The Lord is my Shepherd."

There are psalms without the knowledge of which no child should be permitted to grow up. They are among the priceless treasures of literature. Such poems as Psalms 1, 8, 15, 19, 23, 24, 42, 43, 46, 67, 72, 84, 90, 91, 100, 103, 121, and others that the individual preference may choose, ought to be committed to memory. This can be done almost without effort in early life, and will prove one of the most satisfying and inspiring possessions of later years.

Such songs have power to quiet the restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction that follows after prayer.

Judaism accepted the Psalms as its collection of hymns. From the temple service they were taken over to the synagogue. In daily prayers of morning and evening they have the chief place. The special prayers for the Sabbaths and the festivals are taken from the Psalter. The Hallels, the greater and the lesser, are derived directly from the Hebrew anthology of prayer.

The early Christian church depended almost entirely upon the Psalms for its songs of worship. Most of the first Christians were Jews, familiar with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and by the time the new faith reached the wider portions of the Graeco-Roman world those writings had become classic among its confessors, and those hymns formed the appropriate vehicle for religious expression. Gradually Christian hymns took form. Some of them are found in the New Testament, such as the Ave Maria,[7] the Magnificat,[8]

[7] Luke 1:28; [8] Luke 1:46–55.

the Nunc Dimittis,[9] the Benedictus [10] and the Gloria in Excelsis.[11] Twice in the Pauline writings mention is made of the occasions of Christian worship in which are used "psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs." [12] But manifestly the Psalms had the first place in the music of the new society. It was inevitable therefore that the thought of the church and the synagogue should be measurably unified on the great themes of the holy life by the use of a common vehicle of service.

The Christian churches of all communions have been deeply influenced by this ancient and venerable anthology. Not a little of the musical service of the Greek and Latin churches has been taken directly from the Psalms. The great hymns, In te, Domine, Speravi,[13] Benedicam Domino,[14] Miserere mei, Deus,[15] Venite, exultemus,[16] Non nobis, Domine,[17] and De Profundis [18] are examples of the many drafts made by the church upon this rich store of sacred song. And it must not be forgotten that some communions have until recently confined their hymnody entirely to the Psalms. The Greek chant, Kyrie eleison, "Lord, have mercy upon us," which has found its way into the liturgies of the Roman, the Anglican and other churches, is taken of course from the Psalms, where it may be found in several variant forms.

More interesting still is the fact that many of the familiar hymns are derived from this great collection, and their composition by authors from different communions has not hindered their common use by worshipers of all Christian

[9] Luke 2:29–32; [10] Luke 1:68–79; [11] Luke. 2:14; [12] Cf. Col. 3:16; [13] Ps. 31; [14] Ps. 34; [15] Ps. 15; [16] Ps. 95; [17] Ps. 115; [18] Ps. 130.

bodies. This has been a notable contribution to unity of thought and interest in the churches. The well-known Shepherd Psalm, the twenty-third, has been the inspiration and basis of at least a dozen hymns in constant use. Among them are "The Lord is my Shepherd, no want shall I know," by James Montgomery of the Moravian Church; "The King of love my Shepherd is," by Sir Henry W. Baker, an Anglican; and "Though faint, yet pursuing," by John N. Darby, a Congregationalist. The nineteenth Psalm, almost as familiar, is found in almost as many forms in our hymn books, and by authors as widely distributed by denominational relations. One hardly needs to be reminded of the song of Isaac Watts, the English Independent, "The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord," or the still more classic ode of Joseph Addison, the Anglican, "The spacious firmament on high." Scarcely less familiar are the various versions of the ninetieth Psalm, such as "O God the rock of ages," by Bishop Bickersteth of the English Church, or Watts' "O God our help in ages past."

With such common origins, and with the basic truths of religion for their inspiration, it is inevitable that the hymns of the church should express a unity of Christian sentiment far above the level of denominational variation. The Communion of Saints is never better illustrated than in the music of worship. Think of the old French hymn "Jesus the very thought of Thee," composed by the Roman Catholic Bernard of Clairvaux, and translated by Edward Caswell the Scotch Presbyterian; or of "Jerusalem the golden," composed by another Catholic of the middle ages, Bernard of Cluny, and translated by John Mason Neale, an Anglican; or of Phill-

ips Brooks' hymn of the Nativity "O little town of Bethlehem," the lovely poem of an Episcopalian; or of the oft-sung "O Thou, whose own vast temple stands," by William Cullen Bryant, a Unitarian; or of the glorious prayer "O love, that wilt not let me go," by George Matheson, the Scotch Presbyterian; or "Blest be the tie that binds" by John Fawcett, the English Baptist; or that fine hymn "Where cross the crowded ways of life," by Frank Mason North, the Methodist; or Washington Gladden's immortal poem, "O Master, let me walk with Thee," which is but one of a long list of hymns produced by Congregationalists; or the Quaker Whittier's "Dear Lord and Father of mankind"; or Cardinal Newman's perennially beautiful petition, "Lead, Kindly Light."

These are mere suggestions of the immeasurable treasure of sacred song that has come from the lips and hearts of devout souls in all the churches of every confession and every ritual, based upon the book of Psalms. They reveal the common impulses of our holy faith, and prove that when men gather in the atmosphere of worship they are of one mind, and are unconscious of the sources from which come the hymns they sing. In this fact lies an argument, and also a prophecy.

However satisfying the hymnology of the church may be, in the future as in the past hymn makers will draw from this source some of their most enduring themes. And the fitting finale of all anthologies of worship is that glorious hymn with which the Psalter closes, and which forms its final doxology and benediction, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord, Hallelujah!"

A short book in the canon of the Old Testament which may well be associated with the Psalms is Lamentations. In the usual order of biblical books it follows Jeremiah, owing to the tradition that it was the work of that prophet. But in the Jewish canon it is placed among the Writings. The book consists of five poems lamenting the siege and fall of Jerusalem (presumably the catastrophe of 586 B.C.). Four of these dirges are in the acrostic form, chapters 1, 2 and 4 following the order of the Hebrew alphabet of 22 letters; chapter 3 has 66 verses, three to each letter. Chapter 5 has 22 verses, but is not in acrostic form.

The tradition that Jeremiah was the author of these poems rests perhaps on the reference to that prophet's lament for king Josiah, and the writing called "the lamentations." [19] But it may well be that the Chronicler's reference was to the words of Jeremiah in regard to the two kings, Josiah and Jehoahaz (Shallum) in Jeremiah 21:10–12. The opinion of modern biblical scholars favors a later date than the times of the prophet, if indeed it is not some later siege of Jerusalem that furnishes the background of the poems. The improbability that Jeremiah would have adopted a form of writing so artificial as the acrostic has also to be considered, and the further indications that the poems are the work of different authors, falling probably into three groups, 2 and 4, 1 and 5, and 3.

But whatever the conclusion reached regarding date and authorship, the tragic picture of Jerusalem's fate is clear. As one reads these pathetic paragraphs he realizes that terrible things happened on the streets and in the homes of

[19] 2 Chron. 35:26.

the holy city in that time of terror.[20] Yet all the way through there is the note of confession that the sin of Jerusalem has brought the visitation, and that only in penitence and amendment of life is there hope of better days. No wonder the plaintive words of these threnodies have been read by Jews for many generations at the "wailing wall" beside the old foundation stones of Solomon's temple. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! She is become as a widow. . . . The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the appointed feast. All her gates are desolate, her priests do sigh. . . . Her gates are sunk into the earth. He hath destroyed and broken her bars. Her king and princes are among the nations where the law is not." But like the singer of Psalm 42, the grieving poet will not despair. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed; because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him."

[20] Cf. Ps. 137:7–9.

VIII

BIBLICAL ROMANCES

Like most men who have written with a purpose and endeavored to influence their fellow men to higher ideals, the writers of the Bible were wise enough to include stories, parables, traditions, fables and myths in the material they employed. They were aware that nothing is more attractive than a narrative, whether that narrative is fact or fiction. Sometimes the value of the instruction depends on the reality of the story, its fidelity to fact. Such would be the case in connection with the accounts of the life and work of the prophets, the apostles, and our Lord. We want to be assured of the reliability of the reports we receive regarding the great characters of which the Bible speaks.

But there are many other kinds of narrative that are valuable quite apart from any basis of fact on which they rest. The literature of all peoples is enriched with tales like those of the King Arthur cycle, the Romance of Roland, the epic of the Cid, the Ramayana, the Mahabarata, the Nibelungenlied, and other legends of the past in which there is probably only a fragile thread of fact and a large fabric of imagination. Yet in so far as the stories have the value of illustrating noble qualities and inspiring later generations with generous and chivalrous sentiments, they prove their merit and accomplish their purpose.

Probably no body of writings has ever made ampler use of such materials than the Bible. The teachers of the Hebrew race were masters of the art of illustration. Their language was a pictorial and vivid instrument of thought. Their discourse was replete with figures of speech. To read the pages of the Scriptures without appreciation of this quality is to miss half their beauty, and hold them to a literalness of meaning which they decline to carry. They are thoroughly oriental in their ways of speaking, and in the picturesque, colorful and dramatic way in which their ideas are expressed.

For this reason many forms of speech found in the Bible would seem startling and unreal to the occidental mind had they not been worn down to common usage by centuries of familiar repetition. Think of some of the expressions used even by Jesus, and imagine how they must have disturbed those who first heard them, men of the east though they were. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," "you who strain at gnats and swallow camels," "destroy this temple, and in three days I will rebuild it," "ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of glory"; these were among the astonishing sayings that puzzled and angered the listening scribes.

Yet they were quite in the spirit of Old Testament imagery. Such sayings as "the morning stars sang together," "the trees of the field shall clap their hands," "they are more in number than the sand," "with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were piled up," or "the mountains bowed themselves, and the little hills skipped like rams," are characteristic of Hebrew modes of speech, and are not to be

pressed into literalness. Such passages throw light upon many narratives in which the reader's first impression is that a miracle is being described. Passages like "the Lord cast down great stones upon them," "and the sun stood still in the midst of heaven," "the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire," are dramatic ways of describing natural events, or the retelling of ancient traditions.

Mention has already been made of that background of Semitic mythology to which the Hebrews were heirs, and which explains many legendary and mythological references in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New.* But it should be kept in mind that unlike the Greek myths, which gradually lost their popular vogue with the growth of moral ideals, the Hebrew mythology grew in value as it became apparent that it was figurative rather than factual, and it was released from the burden of cosmical and scientific interpretation and left free to teach its ethical and spiritual lessons.

There are many examples of folk tales, patriarchal legends and nature myths in the Bible, used not as mere interesting recitals, but as possessing the value of illustration and suggestion. The early narratives of Genesis are not significant as records of world beginnings, but they are of great worth as patterns of Semitic mythology made to serve the nobler purpose of ethical and religious teaching. Their emphasis on monotheism, the tragedy of jealousy and hatred, the moral discipline of mankind, and the ideals of primitive Hebrew life served the ends of ethical admonition through the generations of Israel's history. There was time enough

* See page 23.

in the future to teach the facts of world science and history when those facts could be discovered by the regular processes of research and inquiry. The biblical narratives had a different and more important object in view.

The use of fable has several illustrations in the Old Testament. Probably the best remembered is the story told by Jotham the son of Gideon in his protest against the aggression of Abimelech his brother. In that story the trees decided that they would select a king. They offered the honor successively to the olive, the fig and the vine, only to meet with refusal on the ground that private interests interfered with the acceptance of public office. In disappointment and chagrin they then offered the place to the bramble, and the proffer met an instant acceptance.[1] Not the last time in history that public office and responsibility have gone to the worthless and self-seeking because the more capable citizens were too busy with their own affairs to give time to public concerns.

Another telling use of fable is found in the reply of Jehoash of Israel to Amaziah of Judah who challenged him to battle as a trial of strength between the two kingdoms. The cutting answer was the story of the thistle's arrogant proposal to the cedar of Lebanon, "Give thy daughter to my son to wife." But a wild beast passed by, stepped on the thistle, and it disappeared.[2] In these cases and others the narratives lose none of their value by being pure fables. Even more pointed is their application. A wise and witty use of the fable is illustrated in the stories of Æsop, a Greek contemporary of Jeremiah.

[1] Judg. 9:7–15; [2] 2 Kings 14:8, 9o.

Parables are much more frequently employed, both in the Old Testament and the New. They were imaginary episodes told for the purpose of urging a plea or illustrating a truth. The value of the story did not depend on any facts, nor was it lessened by being mere fiction. Joab's device in securing a clever woman from Tekoah to tell the king an imaginary tale regarding her supposed son is a case in point.[3] A similar plan was employed by the unknown author of Ecclesiastes in his use of the ancient king Solomon as the assumed author of his work.[4] Isaiah's parable of the vineyard [5] is an admirable example of this method. This parable is suggestive of the one used by our Lord in his own story of the vineyard and its dishonest keepers.[6]

But of course the supreme example of the use of the parable is Jesus himself. As the word implies, the parables he used were stories that lay parallel to the truth he desired to enforce. There is no hint in any of the score of cases in which he employed them that they were accounts of actual happenings. They were such incidents as might occur, and would be easily understood by his hearers. But they show beyond question that Jesus regarded the use of fiction as both legitimate and worthful for purposes of instruction in morals and religion. Such stories as the Seed and the Soils, the Lost Son, the Good Samaritan, the Tares, and the Hidden Treasure are among the imperishable romances of grace that have been the joy and the admonition of the centuries. They are of universal significance. They can be set over into any language and any situation without loss of their primal values.

[3] 2 Sam. 14:1–20; [4] Eccl. 1:1, 12; [5] Isa. 5:1–7; [6] Matt. 21:33–41.

Among the many narratives found in the Old Testament which appear to have the character of fiction is the book of Job, which even if founded on an older tradition is evidently a work of the imagination in the masterful form in which it has come to us. If the Song of Songs is to be regarded as a drama rather than a series of marriage songs, it is probably a romance of the royal court in the days of Solomon. Some of the stories told in the first part of the book of Daniel would seem to belong to the same class of productions, narratives of purpose for the instruction and encouragement of the people of Israel in days of distress.

There are however three books in the Hebrew Scriptures which have the appearance of works of fiction written with a definite bearing on current thought, and intended to be tracts for the times. They are Ruth, Jonah and Esther. The first two might easily be classed with the prophetic writings, for they are in the spirit of the great works of the prophetic group. The third might with equal propriety be placed in the list of priestly books. But because of the rather clear indications of their nature as works of the imagination rather than as narratives of fact, they demand a different grouping from the formal writings of the prophets and priests.

The book of Ruth is a charming idyl set in the rude times of the judges and affording a striking contrast to the rough and ready narratives contained in the early book of that name. That it was written however in a comparatively late age of the history is shown not only by its literary characteristics, but by its motive and lesson. The thought of the nation in the days after the exile took two divergent

directions. Already in the Babylonian age those two types of sentiment had found expression. Ezekiel was a nationalist of pronounced views. His entire regard was lavished upon the people of the covenant, their violated land, their neglected law and their ruined capital. It was their restoration to their ancient estate that gave impulse to all his prophetic labors. Living among exiled Hebrews in one of the villages of Babylonia, he spent the quarter of a century of his ministry in sustaining the faith of his fellow townsmen and preparing them for a return to their native Palestine. If his thought dwelt upon Israel's future alone it is not a matter for surprise. He had enough to do to meet the difficult tests of his time and his circumstances. None the less the effect of a reading of Ezekiel's messages must have been to intensify the national sentiment, and put an estimate upon Judah and her people far above that accorded to other races. This sentiment grew with the years, and found expression in a number of the later books, like Joel, the Chronicles, Ezra and several of the Psalms. It appears in a still more intense form in Esther, and finds voice in much of the Jewish literature of the first centuries before and after Christ.

On the other hand there was a school of thinkers in Israel to which this narrow, insular and arrogant view was repugnant. The broader and more tolerant attitude had already found utterance in the writings of a contemporary of Ezekiel's, the Second Isaiah. He had insisted that the task of the ideal Servant of Jahveh was not to be limited to the tribes of Jacob, but that he was to be a light to the nations, to bring the divine redemption to the ends of the

earth.[7] This glorious section of the book is shot through with the larger prophetic purpose. It can hardly be doubted, also, that the books of Ruth and Jonah, so different in structure and method, are protests against the parochial attitude of the nationalists, and are efforts to awaken a more tolerant feeling toward their non-Hebrew neighbors.

The little story of Ruth is told in simple and delightful style. A Hebrew family of four — father, mother and two sons — leaves the old home at Bethlehem in a time of famine, and finds a friendly asylum in Moab, beyond Jordan. There the sons marry maidens of the land. In time all three of the men die. The mother, without resources, decides to return to her people in Judah, and counsels her Moabite daughters-in-law to remain with their own kindred and remarry. Orpah resolves to follow this advice, but Ruth will not forsake Naomi, and in one of the most beautiful passages in literature declares her resolution.[8] On arrival in Bethlehem the young woman becomes the provider for the two, and ultimately the wife of the rich householder, Boaz. It is manifestly the intent of the writer to exhibit the hospitality of the people of Moab, where in a former time David had found refuge,[9] but as well to make clear the loyalty of this Moabite girl and the folly of prejudice against her people. Moreover, at the end of the story, there is recorded a genealogy wherein David appears as a descendant of this daughter of a strange people. This is a sentiment very much in contrast with the proverbial hatred of Israel for Moab and other of the neighboring peoples.[10]

The book of Jonah is a similar prophetic comment upon

[7] Isa. 49:6; [8] Ruth 1:16, 17; [9] 1 Sam. 22:3–5; [10] Ps. 60:8; Zeph. 2:9.

the tendency to bitterness of feeling in Hebrew hearts regarding all foreigners. It is not in the usual form of discourse, but is given the mold of a novel, in which a prophet, once mentioned and then dismissed from notice in an earlier record,[11] is made to serve the purpose of a later time. The Jonah of this book can hardly be called the hero of the narrative. Nor can he be described as the villain of the plot. His is a nature too little purposeful and convincing for either of these rôles. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he is the fool in the story, for his character appears as a foil for the real lessons of the book. The prophetic writer, far down in the period of intensifying nationalism, puts his romance back in the days when the city of Nineveh was still standing, the capital of the hated kingdom of Assyria, the cruel overlord of the western lands. To this detested metropolis of the east Jonah is commanded to proceed with a message of immediate doom. Hating the heathen city with all his soul, and suspicious that his words might lead to its repentance and thus avert the destruction which he passionately desires, he takes refuge from his task in flight by sea in the opposite direction. The incidents of the storm, the terror of the seamen, the reluctant consent to follow his counsel and cast him overboard, his deliverance by the great fish (perhaps intended as a symbol of Israel's engulfment and restoration), are the dramatic embellishments of a story with a very definite purpose.

Confronted with a fresh mandate to go to Nineveh and preach his message, the humbled prophet obeys, only to find, as he had feared, and to his complete disgust, that the

[11] 2 Kings 14:25.

entire city repents and puts on sackcloth, to the very beasts of the field. Discontented and reproachful that God has seen fit to change his purpose and spare the city, Jonah asks for death. The little incident of the withered gourd still further reveals the petulant and selfish nature of the man. And the book closes with the moving words, spoken by God, "Should not I have pity on Nineveh that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand people that cannot discern between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle?" The book tells its own story, and needs no homily to make its message clear. In it the tender love of God, even for a heathen and cruel nation, is set in contrast with the prejudice and hatred of a narrow-minded Hebrew, prophet though he was. The miraculous features of the narrative present no difficulties to one who approaches it in the spirit of a student of history and tradition. It is one of the most beautiful and appealing recitals in the Old Testament.

In complete contrast with this account is the book of Esther. Here the nationalist spirit speaks with full force. Like the other books of this group, its date is far down in the post-exilic time. It is the full flowering of the blood-red blossom of intolerance and race hatred. It should be insisted that no people had a larger measure of justification for bitterness of feeling against their persecutors than the Hebrews. Theirs was often a pathetic experience. But for once, in this book of Esther, their nationalism rose to its full expression, and they found a dramatic though wholly literary revenge on their foes. The Persian background of the book is authentic but its events appear to be pure fiction. There are too many historical difficulties in the narrative to

make it convincing. But as a story and a defiance it is complete and satisfying, and it must have been read over and over in days of persecution with feelings of grim exultation. The story is familiar and needs no repetition here. It is enough to point out the dramatic skill with which the successive scenes are constructed, and the book should be reread in this connection.

The Jewish maiden Esther is elevated to the Persian throne through the encouragement of her cousin, Mordecai. She then circumvents the plot of Haman, the prime minister, and brings him to his death and Mordecai to his office. The law decreeing the massacre of the Jews in the realm cannot be changed, but they are permitted to defend themselves, and with fierce satisfaction the author writes that they slew seventy-five thousand of their "enemies," three hundred of whom were cut down in Shushan the palace. This book, like the others, tells its own story and needs no interpretation. The chief consolation the reader has is in the reflection that it is probably a nationalistic romance and not a narrative of fact.

Several of the extra-canonical books, such as those found in the Apocrypha, are also religious novels, each with its own purpose and lesson. Among these Greek writings are Tobit, Judith, some fragments belonging to the Esther story, the additions to the book of Daniel, including the history of Susanna, the Song of the Three Holy Children, and Bel and the Dragon. It is probable also that many of the narratives in 2 Maccabees are imaginary recitals, though they were suggested by the situation described in the first of the Maccabean volumes.

After this hasty survey of the romantic literature of the Bible it hardly needs argument to make clear the value of fiction as well as fact in the teaching of morals and religion, no matter whether that fiction appears in the Scriptures or in such Christian documents of later days as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

IX

THE LITERATURE OF APOCALYPSE

In addition to the types of writing reviewed in the foregoing studies the Jewish people produced in the late years of the pre-Christian period an order of literature differing completely from any of the other varieties found in the Old Testament, an order peculiar to that people and that age. It is known as apocalypse, a word translated "revelation" in the title of the last book in the New Testament, which has the same general characteristics. It would seem that this kind of writing was confined to Jewish authors, and to the years between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D.

It is not prophecy in any true sense, though the book of Daniel, the most conspicuous example in the Old Testament, is often classed with the prophetic books by uncritical readers. It makes use of the device of prediction, which is one of the minor features of prophecy. But apocalypse is a form of writing to which resort was had in times of persecution and danger, when it was deemed wise to speak a message of encouragement to the community of believers, and a secret form of counsel was advisable. The language of apocalypse is cryptic, figurative, and therefore likely to be baffling to all but the circles of initiated believers. In it political and social changes are described in terms of signs, portents, animal forms and catastrophic events. Such books as Daniel and Revelation are filled with lurid, dramatic and

symbolic language in description of world happenings then taking place or believed to be imminent.

It may appear strange that this peculiar type of literature should be found only in Jewish groups and among the early Christians of Jewish birth. The explanation is probably to be found in the fact that the later interpretation of the law had prohibited the exercise of artistic gifts and had to that extent stimulated the resort to picturesque writing. The second commandment had forbidden the making of images for worship. It would seem that in its earliest form this was the extent of the prohibition. Certainly in the construction of the tabernacle and the temple animal forms were employed for decoration, such as oxen, lions and cherubim.[1] These cherubim were apparently suggested by the Assyrian and Babylonian temple and palace guardians, usually composite creatures, such as lions with wings, set for the protection of royal residences and sanctuaries from evil spirits. This was evidently conceived to be their function in Hebrew mythology,[2] and they were also thought to be in emergencies the bearers of Jahveh through the skies.[3] Their images in the sanctuaries, both the tabernacle and the temple, were probably intended to symbolize the protection of the holy chest, the ark.[4]

It is thus apparent that in early times there was no prejudice against the use of animal or mythological forms for the adornment of buildings. But in later days the simple prohibition of the second commandment seems to have been elaborated to its present form, in which it strictly

[1] 1 Kings 7:25, 29; [2] Gen. 3:24; [3] Ps. 18:10; [4] Exod. 25:19–22; 37:7–9; 1 Kings 6:23–25; 8:7; 2 Chron. 3:10–13; 5:7, 8.

forbids the making of any representation of any sort of creature.[5] It is possible of course that the natural inability of the Hebrews in the field of art found justification in the prohibition of decorative forms. This construction of the law of course made impossible any sort of plastic art. Painting, sculpture and even embroidered figures were alike excluded. That left open only the employment of word pictures, and no doubt did much to stimulate that highly figurative style of writing which appears more and more in the later Hebrew literature. In apocalyptic it reaches its fullest expression. This restriction of all decorative effort to writing and the use of words and letters in adornment is also seen among the Mohammedans, who have raised the art of Kufic and Arabic inscriptional decoration to a high level.

No doubt the vivid word pictures of the great prophets of the Assyrian period prepared the way for this more dramatic use of language. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah were orators with impressive gifts of speech. Jeremiah was hardly less effective in his use of word images. But with Ezekiel one finds himself in a veritable picture gallery of colorful scenes, in which the progress from fable, drama, allegory, vision and parable to actual apocalypse is gradual but inevitable. The reader has but to scan the vivid chapters of the prophet of Tel-abib to perceive how graphic is his message and how his book became the quarry from which later writers of the apocalyptic mood took much of their material. The influence of Ezekiel is apparent in Daniel, and particularly in the apocalypse of the New Testament, the book of Revelation.

[5] Exod. 20:8; Deut. 5:8.

The progress from the older forms of prophecy to this feebler type of religious instruction is evident to the least sensitive reader. Apocalypse is the successor of prophecy, attempting to employ some of the more ornate features of the older discipline when the spirit has departed. Prediction, which played a mere subordinate part in the work of the great preachers of the past, now becomes the accepted device of these later and less inspired workers. The appeal to the supernatural is constant. Angels throng the stage of this less forceful form of apostrophe. Coming judgments and deliverances are set forth with constant employment of the marvelous and spectacular. Such transitional writings as Isaiah 24–27, Zechariah 9–14 and Joel are illustrations of this decline. The intent of the writers is urgent and patriotic, but the genius of the former day has departed. The apocalypse is the attempt of a scribe to speak with the voice of prophetic authority. The purpose is to aid the faithful to hold fast their loyalty to the covenant in days of darkness and distress. That the result was in a measure satisfactory is shown by the persistence of national courage through times of deep tragedy, and the additional fact that the writings of the early apocalyptists set the type for a considerable body of literature in the following years.

Not only were there several examples of this literature which found their way into the canon of the Old and New Testaments, but a much larger body of similar character made a place for itself in extra-biblical collections. Such works as those that took form under the name of Enoch, and such documents as the Apocalypse of Baruch, Fourth

Esdras, and the Sibylline Oracles secured a notable place in the regard of Jews and Jewish Christians in the years following the life of our Lord. The motive of all these books is the same. No hope is entertained of relief from present troubles through the preaching of the truth, the method which prophets and apostles alike felt to be the power of God to effect reforms. The only hope lies in the early, indeed the immediate, intervention of God in manifestations of divine power for the suppression of evil and the rewarding of good. There is the same pessimism regarding any other than catastrophic deliverance that has always informed the theologies of despair. The designs of the Eternal, as they are portrayed by these writers, are outlined in historical terms, in which the past periods of human events are reviewed in the form of alleged predictions, put into the mouth of some ancient seer, like Enoch, Baruch, Ezra or Daniel. And for the rest, apocalyptic symbols, numbers, colors and phrases are laid under constant tribute.

The outstanding example of this form of literature in the Old Testament is the book of Daniel. It shares with the book of Revelation the unique features of the school from which it comes. It is one of the most interesting, one might say intriguing, books in the collection. That it is not easy to understand without some knowledge of the form of writing to which it belongs, and the times from which it emerges, goes with the saying. It does not conform to any of the familiar categories represented in the other divisions of the Bible. But properly interpreted, its message and its value become at once apparent. It must have had great influence with the Jewish people not only in the crisis

in which it appeared but in other times of peril. Like other books that have had a particular message and value for a special emergency and have proved helpful in later and similar precarious days, the book of Daniel has proved a fitting word in more than one exigency since the one that called it forth. In such an appreciation of its perpetual value, our Lord cited one of its warnings as applicable in the fresh Roman crisis that was approaching the holy city.[6]

The events that form the historical background of the book of Daniel are recorded in the first chapter of the first book of Maccabees. In the second quarter of the second century B.C. Syria, including Palestine, was ruled by Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, a successor of Seleucus, one of the four generals among whom the empire of Alexander the Great was divided. Being a devoted admirer of the Greek and Roman paganism, he was eager to suppress all other faiths in his dominions. Of these variant cults the most conspicuous and persistent in that region was the Hebrew religion. Failing in the use of other means, Antiochus resorted to persecution, and treated Jerusalem and its people with great cruelty, demolishing portions of the city wall and of the temple, and defiling the sanctuary so that the worship had to be abandoned for a time. This campaign of repression led to the Maccabean uprising, perhaps the most romantic event in the national history.[7] At about the same period the book of Daniel seems to have appeared, whose purpose was to inspire the loyal with courage to persevere in their constancy until the dark days of persecution should cease and the tyrant should fall. This it was con-

[6] Matt. 24:15; cf. Dan. 9:27; [7] 1 Macc. 2–9.

fidently expected would take place within an interval not too long to be endured. This measure of time, as in other apocalyptic works, was usually described as three years and a half.[8]

The book of Daniel is divided into two sections of six chapters each. The first section recounts the experiences of a certain prophet Daniel of the distant past, one of the Hebrews at the court of Nebuchadnezzar (more properly Nebuchadrezzar) king of Babylon. Of a worthy by the name of Daniel traditions had come down the years.[9] Of him and his three Hebrew companions a series of impressive experiences is recorded that would have the value of stimulating the faith and heroism of the people suffering under the oppression of the king, and subjected to numberless temptations to abandon their ancient worship and adopt the inviting paganism of the times.

In the first chapter it is related that Daniel and his friends, selected to become members of the school of the palace where promising youths were taught the arts of divination, declined to abandon their Hebrew rules of diet, and became by the blessing of God the foremost of the king's wise men. In the second, Daniel proves to be the only one of the wise men who can make known to the king a recent dream and its interpretation. In this narrative the historical device of the author is disclosed. By relating the events of the years intervening since the fall of Jerusalem, and putting them into the mouth of Daniel in the form of prediction, the writer is able to describe contemporary happenings as if they were long ago foreseen,

[8] Dan. 7:25; 12:7; cf. Rev. 12:6; 13:5; [9] Ezek. 14:14, 20.

and therefore predetermined in the counsels of God. Four empires follow one another. The first was the Babylonian, of which Nebuchadrezzar was the head. The second was the Median, the third the Persian, and the fourth the Macedonian world empire of Alexander, now divided and crumbling. Its death blow was to be dealt by a new kingdom about to appear, the reign of the God of heaven, which was to take possession of the world and to endure forever. This was to be the rule of the holy people, the Jews, now persecuted but soon to be set in the throne of power.

The third chapter makes no mention of Daniel, but tells of the heroic conduct of his three friends, who were subjected to the cruel penalty for refusal to comply with the king's order to worship his image, and were miraculously preserved from the fire. Such narratives were a direct challenge to the confessors of Israel's faith to maintain their courage steadfast, and to go to any death sooner than prove apostates. The fourth chapter tells of another of the king's dreams, which Daniel interpreted as foreshadowing the divine discipline upon Nebuchadrezzar because of his pride and boastfulness. For seven years he was to be the victim of insanity and live like a beast. Upon his restoration he acknowledged the truth and wisdom of the Most High. A narrative of this kind, though unmentioned in any authentic record of the king's life, could not fail to strengthen the confidence of the people in the God of their fathers.

The fifth chapter tells of the feast made by Belshazzar, a supposed son and successor of Nebuchadrezzar, in which the sacred vessels from the temple at Jerusalem were used in the revelry. A mystic hand writes on the wall the doom

of the king and his kingdom, and the aged Daniel is brought in at the queen-mother's suggestion, and makes known its sinister meaning. Thus ended, according to our author, the Babylonian rule, and the Medes, under Darius, took the kingdom. In this as in several other particulars the writer's order of events differs from that of the historians. It is not, however, the province of the biblical student to correct the statements of the book, but to understand the author's point of view and the use he made of the facts as he had learned them. The last of the six chapters of the narrative records the familiar story of Daniel's fidelity to his God and his deliverance from the lions. It is evident that the traditions embodied in these chapters must have been of the utmost value in inspiring the people of the law to fealty to their institutions and resistance to all inducements to their betrayal.

With the seventh chapter the section of the book which deals with the visions of Daniel opens. This same ancient seer is made the recipient of a series of revelations, all of which deal with the present crisis, the persecutor Antiochus, his early overthrow, and the establishment of the kingdom of God, i.e., the rule of the Jewish people. In the seventh chapter the same ground is traversed as in chapter two. The four empires that are regarded as the foes of the holy people are now represented by four animal forms. The lion is Babylon, the bear is Media, the leopard is Persia, and the fourth terrible beast is the Macedonian or Greek rule, among whose successive kings appears Antiochus, the "little horn," arrogant, blasphemous and cruel. Then the divine judgment is set up, the beast destroyed,

and the kingdom bestowed upon the "son of man," who comes with the clouds of heaven, and is at once identified with the "saints of the Most High," i.e., the Jewish nation, whom all dominions shall serve and obey. In this account there is set forth in vivid form the high hopes for a national triumph cherished by the apocalyptists of that day. The term "son of man" is frequently met in the later Jewish literature of apocalypse. Sometimes it refers to a human being, any man,[10] but more frequently to a divine being with messianic functions.[11] In the New Testament it is used by our Lord in referring to himself[12] and probably at times with direct allusion to Daniel 7:13.[13] The passage in Daniel, however, does not refer to Jesus, as is shown by its context, and the identification there of the "son of man" with the "saints of the Most High," the Jewish people. Moreover the purview of the author of Daniel does not extend beyond the Maccabean age. All reference therefore to the Roman Empire and the ministry of Jesus must be excluded.

In chapter eight the same ground is measured again, save that the first kingdom, Babylon, is omitted from the survey. The two kingdoms of Media and Persia are represented by the ram with the two unequal horns, and the Greek dominion by the goat. Here nothing is left to the imagination, for the author specifies exactly what he means, naming the figures in his vision. The point of the recital is, as before, the "little horn," Antiochus, and his sacrilegious practices against the holy house, the temple.

[10] Ezek. 2:2, 3; 3:1, 3, etc.; [11] Esd. 13:3; Enoch 46:2–4; 62:5, 19, 14; 69:27, etc.; [12] Matt. 9:6; Luke 6:5, etc.; [13] Cf. Mark 14:62; Luke 21:27.

Overhearing the conversation of two angels Daniel learns that the time to elapse before the sanctuary shall be cleansed and the worship resumed will be two thousand three hundred evening-mornings, or eleven hundred days, something less than the usual apocalyptic measure of three years and a half. In the ninth chapter the author undertakes to explain why it is that the seventy years of the captivity spoken of by Jeremiah as the period of the dispersion,[14] and now long since past, did not bring the troubles of Judah to an end. The solution is found in the fact that seventy *weeks* of years, not merely seventy years, was the measure of the time which is now about to end with the destruction of the desolator.

The tenth and eleventh chapters contain a long and detailed description of the wars between Syria on the north and Egypt on the south, which brings the story down again to the well-known figure of Antiochus, whose activities are set forth with a fulness not hitherto attempted.[15] Evidently at that point the narrator came to the moment when he wrote his message, for from that on to the end of the chapter the story is quite general, and differs from the familiar facts of Antiochus' last days. But of one thing the writer was sure — the oppressor was soon to perish, and the day of glory for the holy people was to dawn. This is the element of actual prediction contained in the book. It does not lose, however, by the employment of pseudo-prediction in its earlier portions. That device was as legitimate and valuable for the purposes intended as the use of fable and fiction in many other portions of the Bible.

[14] Jer. 25:11; 29:10; [15] Dan. 11:21–40.

The last chapter is a fitting close to the volume. The seer Daniel is told that a long time intervenes between his age and the final days of which he has just been told. He is to shut up the record and seal it until the end. At that time it will be made clear. One thing alone could be known about the duration of the final age. From the time of the abandonment of the daily burnt offering and the setting up of the "abomination," i.e., the image of Jupiter on the altar of burnt offering at the temple, there would be an interval of twelve hundred and ninety days, a little more than three years and a half. Happy would be those who survived to any date beyond that time, such as the thirteen hundred and thirty-fifth day. The hopes of the book of Daniel, like those of most of the apocalyptic works, were not realized in the manner anticipated. But they kept the faith of the people alive through days of peril and distress. And in that fact they proved their worth.

The apocalyptic features of the New Testament and the great Apocalypse of the early Christian period, are treated in a later chapter.*

* See page 227.

X

THE MAKING AND REMAKING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Any thought of a special collection of Hebrew books must have arisen rather late in the history of the nation of Israel. At that time the total body of writings from which choice could be made was considerable. This aggregate consisted of many sorts of documents. There were state records, legal institutes, prophetic narratives, biographical sketches, collections of hymns and national poems, anthologies of epigrams and other wisdom materials, fragments of prophetic sermons, and masses of more popular and perishable literature such as an active and successful people produces day by day.

As early as 650 B.C. the Judean and Ephraimite prophetic narratives embodying the Book of the Covenant were combined in a body of writings generally known today as the "JE" document, and so well articulated that its analysis is not always clear. But the first indication of a deliberate effort to place a particular writing upon the level of approved sanctity and reverence is observed in connection with the discovery of the book of laws in the temple in the reign of Josiah in 621 B.C. The code thus brought to light was made the basis of a drastic national reformation, and was adopted by the people in a sort of solemn league and covenant as the law of the land. The older legislation of the Book of

the Covenant had been in use for some generations as the authoritative constitution of the state. But from this time on the new code, which in a measure included and now superseded the familiar legal corpus, held the place of power.

The law thus canonized by royal edict and popular approval is now recognized to have been the Deuteronomic legislation. It came into Israel's life in a dramatic manner and at an opportune moment. It possessed the sanction of the venerated name of Moses; it claimed the authority of God; and furthermore it exhibited those inherent qualities of high moral tone, lofty religious purpose and searching appeal which have made it a most valuable portion of the Hebrew Scriptures.

A second stage in the selection of a body of writings as the norm of the nation's life was reached in the days of the two reformers, Nehemiah and Ezra. The former probably arrived in Jerusalem as the voluntary governor of the unhappy province in 445 B.C. The latter came as the leader of a little company of priests and Levites a few years later, probably in 397 B.C. The item of chief interest in connection with Ezra's commission and his journey was that he brought from the richer and more highly organized centers of Hebrew life in the east a copy of a document so important that it is frequently referred to as "the law of God." [1]

This new code of law, revising and superseding the Deuteronomic legislation, appears to have grown out of the assiduous labors of priests and scribes in the schools of the east whither the dispersion had carried their fathers. Since

[1] Ezra 7:14, 21, 26.

the days of Josiah the nation had declined and fallen. Its hopes of political power, tried out in the melancholy efforts to revive Jerusalem, had all but failed. Its future success was believed to lie in the effort to observe with rigorous minuteness the divine will as embodied in rules of conduct. Ezekiel had outlined such a state and the laws by which it was to be governed. A priest, the author of the central chapters of the book of Leviticus, had produced the "Law of Holiness."[2] On the basis of these materials the Priest Code took form. In an assembly like the one held in Josiah's day this roll was read, adopted as "a sure covenant," and solemnly sealed, with a curse upon the indifferent.[3] In this impressive manner a part of the extant Hebrew literature became holy Scripture. That code, including much of the later portion of Exodus, and the books of Leviticus and Numbers, soon after reached its present estate. Somewhat later the books of Moses, as they were called, came to their final form, including the prophetic laws and narratives of the Judean and Ephraimite sources, the Deuteronomic material, the "holiness" institutes, and the Priest Code. This body of writings, fixed into the matrix of the priestly narrative, became the recognized "Book of the Law of Moses."

From that day forth this group of writings was recognized as the Torah, the Law of Moses, the will of God. Nothing ever compared with it in sanctity. Gradually it rose in scribal and popular veneration from one level to another until it was confidently affirmed that Moses wrote it entire. Later still tradition insisted that it was penned in

[2] Lev. 17–26; [3] Neh. 8:1–8; 9:3; 10:28, 29.

heaven and delivered to the immortal lawgiver through ranks of angels.[4] It is possible to say with assurance that this first section of the Old Testament to be recognized as Scripture became canonical soon after the year 400 B.C.

At that date the second group of our Old Testament books, the Prophets, had not attained this rank. We know that by two tokens. The first is the fact that the Samaritans, who at some period subsequent to the reformation of Ezra separated themselves forever from all relations with the Jewish community, adopted the five books of Moses in almost the precise form in which we have them, as their canon of sacred Scripture, but never accepted the other parts of the Old Testament. That Torah of Moses they keep to this day in a highly revered and fairly ancient scroll.* The other fact is the exalted regard in which the books of Chronicles, written about 300 B.C., hold the Law of Moses, while they employ the prophetic books with the utmost freedom, and alter them without hesitation.

By the year 200 B.C. the eight books of the Prophets — Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Roll of the Twelve (the twelve Minor Prophets, from Hosea to Malachi) were accorded canonical recognition. The author of the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) lived about that time. He refers to the Law and the Prophets as acknowledged Scripture in his

* The Samaritans, regarding themselves as the true people of Jahveh, and the Jews as an apostate race, continued to occupy the territory of the northern kingdom, with admixtures of population from other provinces of the Assyrian Empire. Those who survive to the present in Nablus, ancient Shechem, are a little group of less than a hundred people. (Cf. Montgomery, *The Samaritans.*)

[4] Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2.

day. This provides satisfactory assurance of the inclusion of this second group in the canon at that date.

There still remained the miscellaneous books, more or less concerned with religion, but far less revered than those already mentioned. By the time the prophetic list was organized no doubt a large portion of the abundant literature of previous generations had yielded to the vicissitudes of time and disappeared. The nation had passed through such tragedies as might well dissipate all but the most highly prized and carefully preserved of its literary treasures. Certain it is that a large part of the total body of Israel's writings had perished. There were however at hand the great works of poetry like the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, each the result of patient gleaning and revision; the Five Rolls comprising Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther; and two other works, the pseudonymous apocalypse of Daniel, and the priestly record of national events, Chronicles, with its continuations in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Some of these books appeared quite late in the pre-Christian period. In Jesus' reference to the sweep of events from the death of Abel to that of Zachariah [5] he seems to imply the very late date of Chronicles, in which the second of these events is recorded.[6] Daniel was probably written about 164 B.C., and the book of Psalms may have received its final editing as late as 150 B.C. It is not unlikely that the Maccabean struggle created a desire to preserve from destruction as much as possible of the national literature. There are evidences that some of the books included in the

[5] Luke 11:51; [6] 2 Chron. 24:20–22.

canon were not admitted without debate as to their right to admission, for Esther, Canticles and Ecclesiastes were held doubtful by some. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, made for use in Egypt, was begun about two hundred and fifty years before Christ, but not completed until long afterward, and some portions of the material were supplied from other translations. Therefore this version, called the Septuagint or LXX, is not a sure indication of the time at which the canon of the Old Testament was completed.

In the year 132 B.C. the grandson of Jesus the Son of Sirach made a translation of his ancestor's Hebrew work into Greek. In a prologue to this edition mention is made three times over of "the Law, the Prophets, and the other books." There seems to be a reference here to three groups of writings, though it is not certain that the third, "the other books," was a definitely fixed list. It is known that as late as the first century B.C. the progressive and conservative schools among the Jews debated the question as to whether such books as Ecclesiastes and Canticles should be admitted to the canon.

In the New Testament mention is made of the three sections of the Old Testament, the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (the Writings, or Miscellanies, whose first book was the Psalms) as recognized and distinct.[7] Philo the well-known Jewish authority who lived in the first century A.D. quoted frequently from the Hebrew Scripture as a work familiar and of fixed content, and the same is true of Josephus who wrote early in the second Christian century.

[7] Luke 24:44.

By the time the Jewish Council of Jamnia met in 113 A.D. the list of the Hebrew writings had been decided beyond debate. It would seem then that the canon of the Law was settled as early as the fourth century B.C., the Prophets by 200 B.C., and at least the major portion of the Writings as early as 132 B.C.

Probably the final criterion by which a book was judged as entitled to a place in the approved collection was the fact that it was written in the Hebrew language. At least our present Old Testament includes everything that survived from that literature. If the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach seems to be an exception, since fragments of the original Hebrew of the book have appeared in recent times, it must be recalled that it only became current in its later Greek form. Such a criterion would perhaps explain why books like Ecclesiastes and Canticles were included, and the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sirach) omitted. By the time the final verdicts were rendered the Hebrew language had ceased to be used, and was therefore classic and sacred.

It is apparent that through the centuries in which the materials of the Old Testament were taking form a large measure of freedom was felt in their treatment. They were fragments of a much larger body of writing, and the processes of revision and selection were going on continuously. Some writings were treasured because of their appeal to the religious spirit. Others perished. But none was regarded at the time of its production as of divine origin or special sacredness. They were handled with great freedom, and such judgment as sensitive minds brought to bear

upon their value and finality was exercised with entire liberty and confidence.

In this freedom to correct and modify the work of an earlier time lay the ground of such numerous revisions and alterations as the Old Testament reveals. There were changes of the text made not so much in the interest of accuracy of record as in the effort to secure better teaching or practice. The teachers of one generation felt free to amend and correct what they regarded as the imperfect or unethical ideals of an earlier age. Sometimes these related to standards of human conduct, and sometimes to interpretations of the divine character. The writers of the Hebrew religious literature were as unconscious that they were producing a sacred book as were the authors of the New Testament documents. They were concerned only to give emphatic utterance to their own highest conceptions of truth, or to correct what seemed to them the errors of their predecessors. They were unaware of any such qualities of exactness and finality as later generations were to attribute to their work. They held no views regarding the unalterable nature of Scripture, because they had no conception of any formal and precise values in the writings that they were producing. All such views belong to a later age. If the interpreters of the Bible had always dealt with these documents with the freedom and insight which animated the original writers of the two Testaments, the modern generation would need to waste less time in the correction of erroneous opinions concerning the nature and value of the Scriptures.

The most casual reading of the Hebrew records dis-

closes a large amount of editorial work. This is most noticeable in those portions of the material where there are parallel narratives, as in the Samuel-Kings accounts compared with those of Chronicles. Here the selection and correction of the recital in the later document are apparent. Many of these changes, and others that might be noted, are not the mere editorial revisions and suggestions which scribal workers upon the text might have produced, but rather those integral alterations which reveal the activities of men who counted themselves no mere revisers of the text, but first-hand students of its content and critics of its utterances. A few illustrations will afford some more adequate idea of a process which is discoverable in many parts of the Old Testament. Naturally the best field for observation is the poetical literature, where meter and rhythm afford additional aid in the study. But this is by no means the only class of writing where the process of revision may be noted.

In the song of Hannah [8] it is apparent that some work of a corrective sort has brought the poem to its present form. It is clear that it bears no marks of appropriateness to the incidents of the surrounding record. It would be difficult to conceive of its composition in its present form by a Hebrew woman even of Hannah's character and experience. Nor does it seem wholly satisfactory to suppose, with some of the commentators, that a later and more general hymn of national thanksgiving has been appropriated by the author of the narrative and put into the mouth of this mother in Israel, because of its single reference to the

[8] 1 Samuel 2.

barren woman having borne seven. On the other hand, it seems probable that the poem may have been at first an entirely personal statement of experience, whether Hannah's or another's. But these personal touches have been definitely and scrupulously cut away in order to give the poem greater value as a national utterance. And probably also those strictly national references which occur here and there in the song were added in the same corrective and revisional spirit by men who felt that the original poem was too limited in expression to meet the needs of the occasion. There is, to be sure, a wearing away of individual characteristics that may be seen in the history of many poems adapted for hymn use. But the process of deliberate and careful alteration is just as evident in others, to be found in all our hymn collections. And there is no reason to doubt that this more satisfactory explanation may be employed in more than one of the biblical poems, of which this is an example.

Many of the Psalms reveal the work of revisers. The list of these alterations, which are more deliberate and thoroughgoing than the common editorial corrections, would be a very long one if followed out. But note, for example, the changes wrought in the structure of such alphabetic Psalms as 9, 10, 25, 34 and the like. It is customary to attribute the broken structure of these Psalms to the carelessness of transcribers who have failed to incorporate the sections whose absence is revealed by the acrostic arrangement. But this is not a wholly satisfactory theory. In the Psalms mentioned there are not only omissions but additions as well, as is proved by the metrical structure of

the poems. And the excision of the lost parts would appear to be as definitely the work of a reviser and critic as the additional lines.*

Psalm 18 is an excellent example of the tendency to amplify and strengthen a poem as well as to offer some element of a corrective sort to its general course of statement, by the addition of warning and appeal. The poem is of course an ode which in its simplest form was perhaps a war song of David's age. Its use in 1 Samuel 22 lends sanction to this view. But certain additions to the original structure tend to bring it up to date, and protect it from interpretation in accordance with older views of the character of God. In verses 21–24 there is a direct injunction to fidelity to the Deuteronomic law. In verses 25–28 the reader is enjoined to the observance of those principles of Hebrew "wisdom" which had become a part of the nation's ethical law. And other additions of a national character, such as are found in verses 45, 46 and 50, give additional assurance of late revisional and corrective activities.

Psalm 22 is a description of the fate of some unhappy individual or of suffering Israel in days of persecution. But verses 24, 25 and 27 present liturgical additions quite beyond the ranges of experience pictured in the psalm, while verses 28–32 are a messianic comment which changes entirely the current of thought and gives a larger significance to the experience. Psalm 32 was at first probably a simple penitential hymn. But it is sprinkled with ethical and liturgical

* The metrical structure and the acrostic form are made evident in such a work as *The Old Testament — An American Translation*, by J. M. P. Smith and others.

additions intended to make it more useful as an instrument of religious instruction.

Another type of textual change is illustrated by the well-known passage in Zechariah 6:9–15. Into the community of Jerusalem, now slowly reviving, a company of pilgrims from Babylonia had recently come, bringing offerings of silver and gold. The text reads as follows: "Take of them silver and gold and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and speak unto him saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts saying, Behold the man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place and he shall build the temple of the Lord." It is apparent that the confusion of this text is not the result of carelessness or chance but is deliberate, the consequence of a desire to conceal as far as possible the unhappy outcome of the effort to establish Judah as an independent principality under the sovereignty of Zerubbabel. It would seem that by the patriotic efforts of the prophets and the people a crown was prepared for Zerubbabel, out of these gifts from the east. But the suspicion of the Persian officials of the colony was aroused by this procedure, and in some manner not described Zerubbabel was removed from his place, for he disappears completely from the story. The account which frankly recited the facts was then changed to make it appear that crowns had been prepared, both for Zerubbabel *and* Joshua, making them significant merely as the symbols of the reverence of the community, but not of royal power. Finally, under the impulse of a desire to suppress as far as possible all reference to the tragic outcome of the matter, the name of Zerubbabel

was dropped entirely from the narrative, leaving the text in its present confused condition. These are only a few of the examples which might be cited, which indicate deliberate revisional and critical activity upon the text of the Old Testament by those who felt themselves as competent to write of the matters in hand as the men by whom the original message was prepared.

Another class of revisional changes wrought by critical workers in Old Testament literature includes corrections of previous historical statement, religious teaching or institutional enactments. As is to be expected, the most conspicuous examples are furnished by the prophetic and priestly schools, although instances are not wanting in the work of other teachers in Israel. The narratives of the rise of the Hebrew state we owe in their earliest form to the group of writers belonging to the southern kingdom and known in general as the Jahvists, the date of whose literary output is perhaps about 850 B.C. It was the purpose of these writers, apparently, to glorify the Davidic monarchy. They drew freely upon the sources at hand, and their account of the facts is the most authentic we possess, owing to their nearness to the events of which they wrote. They did not hesitate to incorporate their own later conceptions of truth in their record of traditional national experiences. It was natural for them to read the customs and institutions of their own time back into the most primitive ages, as such stories as that of Cain and Abel suggest. But as they were inspired by no particular apologetic purpose, the historical facts which they included in their narrative approached nearer to the actual events than any other body of Old Testa-

ment narratives. These Jahvist teachers represent in general the type of thought embodied in the messages of Elijah and Elisha. Jahveh was for them essentially a tribal God, who insisted upon tribal loyalty, and enforced his will by rewards and punishments not unmixed with caprice. The ethical standards of the time were not above the cruel and vindictive level of a primitive time. But the narratives of these workers are vivid, picturesque and not without great significance as Israel's earliest embodiment of ethical sanctions and religious ideas.

A century and more later another group of teachers, aroused no doubt by the preaching of such prophets as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, and companions with them in the task of religious and moral reform, issued a new body of narratives of the past in which a definite effort was made to correct and bring up to date the national conception of its God and its history. A wholly new interpretation of religion and of national responsibility was embodied in these Elohistic narratives, whose date was probably about 750 B.C. They exhibit a revisal of judgment, a correction of facts and a criticism of past standards which cannot escape the attention of the observant student. It is probable that their representation of the events of national character is less reliable than that of their predecessors, both because they were at a further remove from them, and because of the inevitable bias of their reforming purpose. They were the children of their age and the ability to repress personal and partisan bias has only in part been achieved in scientific circles even at the present day.

These men wrought under a sense of duty. The

contest between Assyria and Egypt had brought up a wholly new body of problems and widened the horizon of the national life. The old doctrine of tribalism had to be given up for a broader conception of God's relation to his people and the world. Higher moral standards were erected. Obedience became less a matter of clan interest than of religious obligation. Moral excellence was emphasized. Justice and chastity were enjoined. A new theology as well as a new morality was enforced by these companions of the first writing prophets. And just as the work of Amos and the other moral leaders of the age was directed against the earlier and partial religion of the Jahvists, so these writers of the Elohistic school transformed the story of the past into a vindication of the new faith.

One of the most familiar and outstanding instances of this is the story of Abraham and Hagar as presented in the two sources. The Jahvist account indicates no scruple on the part of the patriarch in his expulsion of the slave woman, about to become a mother. The picture of this servant wandering in the desert alone and friendless awaiting the peril of motherhood is softened by no sensitiveness in the writer's feelings.[9] On the other hand the Elohistic account deliberately changes the story to a more humane attitude on the part of Abraham, who after the child has grown into boyhood dismisses the woman, but not without grave concern and careful provision for her welfare.[10] The change of sentiment manifested in the second recital of the facts is illustrative of a higher conception of human relations and responsibilities.

[9] Gen. 16:6, 7; [10] Gen. 21:9–14.

A similar difference is to be noticed in the spirit of the earlier institutes of Israel embodied in the two sets of narratives respectively. This is perhaps best seen in the contents of the two forms of the ten commandments, quite different in substance, but each claiming to be the original code of ten words inscribed upon the tablets of stone. The Jahvist list found in Exodus 34 contains purely ceremonial enactments, while that of the Elohists in Exodus 20 is concerned with religious and ethical considerations, just such matters as those with which Amos and his prophetic companions would be likely to deal. The spirit of free criticism and correction is evident.

Again the Jahvists exhibit a wholly different conception of God from that presented by their successors. More particularly is this apparent in the human, anthropomorphic character attributed to deity in the older source, where he works at the task of creation, walks in the garden for the cool of the day, shuts Noah into the Ark, and smells the reek of sacrifice. In the Elohist narratives he reveals himself only to choice and elect men, the moral leaders of the people, and if his appearance is suggested it is in some such sublime fashion as in the vision of Jacob at Bethel. In these and many other instances the freedom to revise, criticize and transform the material of the past or to displace it with new recitals of the facts is apparent. There is no superstitious reverence for the writings of the religious teachers of an earlier age. The fear of modifying the words of Scripture was still far in the future.

Not alone in the writings of the prophetic narrators of Israel's national experience does this corrective and critical

process appear. It is even more striking in the personal utterances of the prophets themselves. Nor is this criticism of theirs confined to popular errors of the past and present. It is not infrequently explicitly directed at the prophetic ideals and teachings of earlier times. For example it is clear that David's cruelty in war, as well as the devastating savagery of his predecessors, was distinctly approved by the prophets of the earlier age. One need hardly to be reminded of the instructions given by Samuel regarding the extermination of the Amalekites, or the commendatory spirit in which David's treatment of his enemies and the captives taken in his wars was described by the prophetic narrators of the age. Contrast with this Amos' severe arraignment of neighboring nations for precisely the same conduct, the whole tenor of his discourse implying the rise of Israel to moral levels where such vindictivenes and barbarism could no longer be even conceived.[11]

Another instance of similar character is Hosea's mordant condemnation of the bloody reforms of Jehu, the destroyer of the house of Ahab. Yet the prophetic approval of that transaction was explicit. The command conveyed to Jehu from Elisha is reported in these words, "Thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of Jahveh at the hand of Jezebel; for all the house of Ahab shall perish."[12] And in the prophetic records of Jehu's reign his explicit praise by the prophetic group of his time is recorded in these words, "And Jahveh said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right

[11] Amos 1, 2; [12] 2 Kings 9:7.

in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, thy sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." [13] Is it not past all doubt that Hosea had in mind not only the events of that bloody time but as well the prophetic commendation of Jehu's course, when he wrote a century later in the chronicle of his own prophetic experience, "Yet a little while and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease"? [14] Here the critical and corrective spirit of the prophet speaks in unmistakable terms.

Another example of similar character may be cited. The section of the book of Isaiah included in chapters 40 to 55 is to a large degree a message of encouragement to the scattered clans of Judah. The work of Cyrus upon the eastern frontier of Babylonia affords the writer a distinct intimation of the providential preparation for the release of the dispersed Hebrews and their homeward journey. Jerusalem must be rebuilt under the protecting care of the God, in comparison with whom the deities of Babylon are mere creatures of the workshop. The tone of this series of oracles is distinctly national, concerned only with the reorganization of Hebrew institutions. But the striking phenomenon of this section of the book is the insertion of four impressive poems, the "Servant passages," [15] whose relation to the body of the work has been variously judged. Some have thought them the basis of the entire work, others an integral part of it, and still others later insertions. One reason which makes the last of these three views more satisfactory

[13] 2 Kings 10:30; [14] Hosea 1:4; [15] Isa. 42, 49, 50, 52-53.

than the others is the distinct critical and correctional tone of these four poems when compared with their context. Their message is a definite rejection of the purely national and selfish attitude of earlier prophets. They point the people to a far loftier and broader mission, as a world force for the interpretation of Jahveh's religion. With a definiteness which appears full of rebuke to the narrow spirit of certain contemporaries, they call the people to an unselfish commitment to the high task of missionary effort. And this fact goes far toward vindicating their later insertion as an attempt to revise and transform the spirit of this prophetic message.

Another field in which the same critical processes are plainly perceptible is that of the priestly writings. Perhaps even more apparent is the revisional tendency in this body of writings than in that of the prophets. The earliest embodiment of Hebrew legislation is to be found in the Book of the Covenant with its supplement from the Jahvistic source.* This was probably the constitution of the state during the whole of the earlier monarchy. But in the dark days of Manasseh, following certain tentative efforts already made by reformers like Hezekiah, the priests and prophets of the loyal group prepared a new statement of the laws of the nation, intended to be a corrective of the vicious practices which had become habitual in the provincial sanctuaries. A comparison of the Deuteronomic code with the earlier law puts beyond question the revisional, critical, and corrective character of its laws. It was no mere casual improvement of conditions which these reformers desired. It was the

* See page 67.

definite abolition of religious customs which had enjoyed the sanction of the older legislation. The changes wrought by these persecuted workers during the days of darkness appeared in the drastic changes wrought by the Josian reformation. The contrasts between the older and the newer law are almost too familiar to need recital. Two or three alone may be mentioned.

The earlier legislation had permitted worship at any spot where the sanction of tradition and custom had created a shrine. And this practice prevailed freely up to the times of Josiah and was sanctioned by the authority of the most distinguished moral leaders of Israel. The new law of Deuteronomy explicitly forbade all this provincial worship, and centered the religious cultus at the Jerusalem sanctuary, under penalties which were certain to insure its observance. The critical attitude of these reformers toward the practice of the past is beyond all misinterpretation.

Likewise was there a definite change in the estate of the priestly class. Formerly every man was permitted to perform priestly functions in his own family. The tribe of Levi, honored for the sake of Moses, its most distinguished member, was held to be available for priestly services, but not set apart by any direct enactment. Nor was Levitical ministry ever deemed obligatory, though the customs of such kings as David and Solomon had promoted the priestly importance of the tribe. But with Deuteronomy all this was changed. The priesthood was definitely limited to the Levites, all of whom were placed by this legislation upon the same high footing of equality without gradations of rank.

The terms "priest" and "Levite" were now exactly equivalent.

Similarly the income of the priestly class was placed upon a wholly different foundation by the reformers. Hitherto no provision had been made for their support. If they were employed at all, their compensation was left to the goodwill of the worshipers or was gradually fixed by custom. But the Deuteronomic law placed this matter upon a definite basis by specifying the precise gift that should be accorded the priest upon the performance of his duties.

The changes wrought by the Deuteronomic law were very numerous and their consideration might be indefinitely extended. But the ethical advance recorded in this legislation is as notable as its ritualistic reforms. The whole spirit of the work is distinctly an improvement over the conceptions of the earlier times. Nor is it possible to escape the impression constantly conveyed by this body of writings that it was the effort of its makers to displace the cruder and less ethical and effective ideals of earlier times by the new institutes which they were presenting.

During the early years of the exile another body of law took form under the hand of the prophet Ezekiel. His efforts were devoted to the revival of the national spirit under the inspiration of a picture of the rebuilt Jerusalem. Of this city the temple was to be the most important structure, and around it was to be organized the sacred community with its various orders of priests and rulers. The code of Ezekiel was never actually organized into the life of the nation, but its impress upon legislation may be traced with definiteness. It was a distinct criticism of the Deuteronomic scheme in

various particulars, notably that of a common level for the priests. In Ezekiel's code these were limited to the family of Zadok. In other respects as well the ideals of Deuteronomy and the Josian reformation were revised and corrected.

The code of Holiness contained in Leviticus 17–26 presents materials of different and somewhat conflicting character, but on the whole is directed to the effort to create a community of distinctly worthier life than in the old royal days, the emphasis now being placed upon ritualistic and ceremonial holiness. With this in later times was joined the Priest Code brought to Judah in the age of Nehemiah and Ezra. Its insistence was placed upon a holy people, meeting at specific times in a sacred congregation about a holy chest, the ark, where certain relics of the past were preserved. Only at such a place could worship be effectual. Nor were the creators of this code of law satisfied to allow the people to remain possessed of the idea that the sanctuary had ever been the simple and unpretentious structure which the national records described. On the contrary they insisted that the tabernacle in the wilderness had been a sanctuary of such elaborate and costly character as to differ but little from the permanent structure erected by Solomon on the sacred site of Zion.

In these efforts of succeeding generations of priestly workers to evaluate, criticise, displace, and reconstruct the priestly and liturgical institutions of the nation, there is displayed a spirit of freedom and confidence which submits itself in no wise to traditional obligations, but is concerned alone with the duty owed to the sacred community and to God. The work of these reformers was devoted, not

to the recovery of obscure facts and neglected institutions, but to the creation of new ideals of conduct and forms of worship believed to be necessary for the times in which they lived. They found in this task a sufficient guaranty of the divine approval, and they asked no man's consent to the labors which they so freely bestowed out of pure love for the religion which they were both restoring and creating.

Further illustrations of this principle of criticism and revision in other parts of the Old Testament are abundant. The corrective element in the speeches of Elihu in the book of Job, the reconstruction of Israel's history undertaken by the Chronicler and intended to displace the prophetic and non-liturgical version of the national history, and the work of the apocalyptists, notably in the books of Daniel and Enoch, to supplant the doctrine of the effectiveness of the prophetic word with their own theology of divine intervention, are examples of the same revising spirit. Thus it is clear that the Old Testament exhibits numerous and striking examples of the efforts of holy men to revise the opinions of the past; to correct earlier standards of conduct; and to present definite and decisive criticisms of the history and institutions of a former time under the compulsion of a duty as impressive as that which animated the original authors of the record.

XI

ISRAEL AND THE MONUMENTS

In few things is our modern age more remarkable than in the aid it has rendered the student of the Bible in the understanding and interpretation of its records. From widely diverse areas light has poured in upon the Scriptures. The biblical text both of the Old and the New Testaments has been examined and corrected with the most minute and exhaustive comparison of the various versions. Materials for this labor of emendation have appeared from many sources and are still appearing. The better knowledge of languages into which the Bible was translated in early days has yielded valuable results in the reconstruction of the original text. The historical and literary criticism of the biblical documents has solved many problems that baffled earlier scholars. The contemporary history of the classic age of Hebrew life, and of the Christian church in the Graeco-Roman world has been investigated with scientific diligence and with significant results. Comparative religion has taken its place among the contributing disciplines. And students of world culture, as it has been disclosed in the areas of the fertile crescent, the home of the Semitic races, have been enabled to offer to biblical specialists numerous suggestions of value for the illumination of the sacred narratives.

But in many ways the most important service has been rendered by archaeological research. This has been pros-

ecuted in all the lands that formed in ancient days the environment of the biblical peoples. Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Asia Minor, the Greek cities of the New Testament, and above all Palestine itself have been searched with greater or less thoroughness for materials that might assist in the reconstruction of the civilizations out of which the Bible emerged. The results have been valuable and rewarding. Only a beginning has as yet been made in the undertaking, but this beginning has afforded glimpses of materials hitherto inaccessible and destined to play a notable part in future studies.

The scholar has at hand today a growing mass of confirmatory and corrective facts yielded up by the mounds and ruins of the oriental world. Cities long buried have given up their secrets. Rulers thought to be half mythical have come forth into the light of verifiable knowledge, and incidents recorded in the Bible are now attested by the historical records of the Tigris and the Nile. The results achieved by archaeology are the more impressive when it is recalled that until recent years the early stories of Egypt and the Mesopotamian peninsula were locked in the mysterious grasp of unknown languages. Nothing more romantic has been accomplished by scientific research than the opening of the secret doors that admitted the modern age to a knowledge of the literatures of these two great civilizations. And other disclosures equally thrilling may well be expected.

Until recent years the Bible was supposed to stand comparatively alone on the far frontier of the world's literature. It was thought to be one of the oldest of human documents. The books of Genesis and Job held the regard of the earlier

generations as the most venerable of writings. Happily this tradition has been corrected. The Scriptures represent a fairly recent movement in the literary history of mankind. Far older than these records are the landmarks of the world's literary origins. The patriarchs are men of yesterday, and the oldest portions of the biblical text find their places far this side of the first classics of China, the pyramid texts of Egypt, or the laws of King Hammurabi of Babylon.

Moreover the stage on which the Bible once stood solitary and unsupported has gradually filled with characters from the surrounding lands. One knew nothing two generations ago of such places as Ur, Haran, Pithom, Gezer, Megiddo and Gath save from the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures. Were there actually such rulers as Rameses, Ahab, Jehu, Menahem, Sargon and Sennacherib, or were the stories told of them in biblical books to be regarded with the reserve befitting the readers of romance? Such doubts are no longer entertained, for the monuments have given their witness, and the figures that looked so questionable have moved up into the light of authentic history.

At first the records of the Old Testament make upon the reader the impression of a rich and cultured civilization, in comparison with which the peoples of neighboring lands were on a lower level of knowledge and artistic achievement. The reigns of Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Ahab and Hezekiah are described with a patriotic enthusiasm which tends to leave the impression that the near-by nations, though more powerful, were less amply furnished than Israel with the insight, the wisdom and graces of a true culture. They were the lesser breeds without the law. But later knowledge

gained from the study of these adjoining races leaves no room for such opinions. History and archaeology have made them impossible. In comparison with the civilization of Egypt and Babylonia, that of Palestine was disappointingly meager. Among the Hebrews the progress of most of the arts, agriculture, the use of tools and weapons, architecture, decoration, medical science, business procedure and legal theory was very slow. In Europe contemporary periods were far more advanced, and in the Orient Egypt was always far ahead. All the more surprising therefore is the moral and religious output of this little country. No known culture has originated in the Palestinian region. But from it there emerged a spirit and a message that were of far greater moment to the world.

The discoveries which have made possible these and other conclusions regarding the land of the Lord and the related lands have been made in recent years. This is both fortunate and regrettable. It is to be deplored that since Palestine has been known, loved and visited by innumerable multitudes through all the years since the first era of pilgrimage, no plan should have been devised earlier for the preservation of the mass of priceless archaeological material which has been collected, sold, stolen, destroyed, or otherwise wasted by ignorant curiosity hunters all through the centuries. The only consolation is to be found in the fact that the souvenir seeker is a creature of fairly modern arrival, and has been able to work havoc to a lesser degree than his earlier appearance would have permitted. The commercial value of antiquities, either genuine or spurious, is so much a matter of common report among the natives in the lands

around the eastern end of the Mediterranean that the mere survey of a presumed historic site is likely to set the people of the district to digging on their own account for the supposed treasure.

An instance of this tendency and danger came to attention at the time of a visit by a party of students and teachers from the University of Chicago to the site of the ancient city of Gezer while Dr. Macalister was excavating there for the Palestine Fund. Almost as soon as the examination of the mound was begun by the group, the doctor explained that a most unfortunate incident had occurred on the previous day. In digging they had turned up a wedge of gold, perhaps something like the one taken by Achan from the spoil of Jericho. Instantly the entire neighboring village from which their workers were recruited was excited by the report, and the people forgetful of all restraint began to dig here, there and everywhere in the hope of further finds. It is always hard at the best to convince the native that the archaeologist is searching for anything less immediately valuable than treasure, and an episode of the sort mentioned may do incalculable damage to the work of the explorer. About the best that can be done is to impress the natives with the idea that the best market they can find for a real discovery is the investigator himself or the nearest museum. And in Egypt at least this is a fairly well established tradition.

On the other hand it is fortunate that only a limited amount of excavation was undertaken in the period before the technique of scientific survey and digging had been developed. Much of the older trench work carried on by pioneers in the field was partial, expensive and destructive

of later effort. The present methods take account of every cubic yard of soil and make careful record of all it contains, even the most minute objects. The knowledge of the various forms of pottery, whose fragments were once thrown aside as worthless, has now been brought to such an exact state that experts are able to determine with approximate certainty the date of any such remains. Professor Petrie has made it clear that potsherds have a higher average value even than inscriptions. Their precise location therefore, the level at which they are found, is a matter of immense importance to the archaeologist and the historian. From this point of view it is fortunate that only a limited amount of excavating has as yet been undertaken. This may seem a curious statement in the light of the long list of explorers and excavators who have worked in biblical lands. Nevertheless, in comparison with the enormous and highly significant work which lies ahead one may say that the enterprise has hardly more than begun.

The most fruitful of the regions in which one expects to find material for biblical study is Egypt, for here the sand, both menacing and protective, has combined with the hot climate to preserve enormous quantities of pictorial and inscriptional data which in regions colder and less dry would have perished. Egypt is hardly more than the valley of the Nile, a little strip of green and fertile land that winds down from the Abyssinian highlands through the trenches of the White and Blue Niles to widen into the Delta a thousand miles to the north. In this valley lived the people, a mixture of Semite, Berber and Negroid stocks, who covered innumerable monoliths and slabs of red sandstone and granite

with the curious picture writing that teased the imagination of travelers through the centuries till our own days. Their temples, palaces, pyramids and monuments were scattered along this opulent stream which was both sustainer and deity to them. Their story reaches back into the fourth millennium before Christ. At some period prior to 4000 B.C. the various nomes into which the country was divided were consolidated into two kingdoms, Upper and Lower Egypt, the former of which extended from the Delta to the first cataract and had for its symbol the papyrus plant. After a pre-dynastic period lasting for several hundred years, the first dynasty was founded by Mena about 3400 B.C. and left the records of its turquoise mining operations in admirably wrought inscriptions at the Wady Maghara in the so-called peninsula of Sinai. Thus early the picture writing, the priestly script or hieroglyphic, had taken form.

During the third and fourth dynasties the building of pyramids for royal tombs began. Of these the earliest was that of Zoser, about 3000 B.C., known as the Step Pyramid, at Sakkara, a few miles from Cairo. Khufu or Cheops, the founder of the fourth dynasty, improved upon the idea and constructed the first real pyramid, the largest of them all. The stone for this immense structure was quarried from the Mokattam hills across the Nile, more than twelve miles away. Khafre, the second king from Khufu, built for himself a pyramid tomb almost as huge as the Great Pyramid, and also carved from the native rock near these two tombs a massive sphinx, the face of which bore his own likeness. Between its extended paws he set a small mortuary temple for perpetual priestly services in his honor.

In the twelfth dynasty, a period of expansion to the south, Amenemhet III, about 2000 B.C., conducted further mining operations in Sinai and built there a temple in honor of Hathor, mistress of the mafkat or turquois, at a place now called Sarbut el-Khadem With the thirteenth dynasty, about 1788 B.C., there ensued a time of foreign invasion and national decline. This is the period of the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, so called, who apparently came in from Asia, and may have been Semites or possibly Hittites.

With the seventeenth dynasty, about 1600 B.C., there was a revival of the national spirit, and the foreigners were expelled. There followed the era of Thothmes III, the greatest of the kings of Egypt, who extended the boundaries of the realm far into Asia. One of his notable triumphs was the Battle of Megiddo, in which he crushed a league of North Syria and Palestine under the leadership of the king of Kadesh. Between 1478 and 1450 he made a dozen or more expeditions into Palestine, Syria and Phoenicia. His inscription on the walls of the temple of Amon at Karnak names many places which are mentioned as Hebrew towns in the Old Testament. Thebes the capital became one of the renowned cities of the world. Its palaces and temples were situated on the east bank of the Nile, and the necropolis was across the river in the valley of the royal tombs.

With the arrival of the eighteenth dynasty about 1450 the power and splendor of Egypt reached their culmination. Amenhotep III contracted marriages with Mitanni and Babylonia. But the next reign told a different story. Amenhotep IV, the so-called heretic king, abandoned the capital at Thebes, set up a new center of the empire at a city which

he called Akhetaten, the "Horizon of Aten," the solar disc, and changed his own name to Akhenaten, or Ikhnaten, "Aten is satisfied." The site of the city which he thus constructed as a rival to the former capital and sanctuary of Amon at Thebes is now known as Tel el-Amarna, and is situated about 200 miles south of Cairo on the east bank of the Nile. There in 1887 there were discovered nearly four hundred clay tablets in the Babylonian character which disclosed when read a hitherto unknown chapter in the history of Egypt and its dependencies in the fifteenth century B.C. These letters were from officials of the empire in Palestine and Phoenicia, and were written to Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV. Seven of them were from Ebed-hepa, king of Jerusalem about 1360 B.C., more than 350 years before David took it for his capital.

The light which these letters throw upon the character of Amenhotep IV, or Akhenaten, as he preferred to call himself, has raised interesting questions for students of history to ponder. Was he the eager monotheist, the first of his kind in history, the man who antedated Amos and Josiah by centuries and cared more for his religious ideals than he did for sovereignty? Or was he a fatuous and impracticable dreamer, an antiquarian, a dabbler in theology, who had resented the arrogance of the priests of Amon at Thebes and determined to ruin them and establish his authority by removing the capital to a new site? Either view may be held, as one reads the story, and each has its scholarly defenders. But the Amarna age was one of the most significant in Egyptian annals, and the contribution which its clay-tablet library has made to history and literature, tragic

as were the experiences of those records, is second to none in the story of research.*

The warnings contained in the official letters to the court at the new seat of power were ineffective. Akhenaten either had no interest in the campaigns which could have kept his empire intact, or he was, as has been charged, a convinced pacifist. At all events the subject states soon broke away from their allegiance, and the downfall of the new régime was inevitable. No son was available to carry on the government, and after one son-in-law had failed, the youthful Tut-ankh-amen came to the throne. It was not long till he made peace with the hierarchy at Thebes, and the capital was transferred back to its former location. The new city, laid out with such painstaking interest, was abandoned to the encroaching sands, and like Amber among the hills of Jaypur, or Fatihpur-sikri, the darling enterprise of Akbar the Great, has been for centuries the home of the jackal and the owl.

But that tomb of the boy king, with no drop of royal blood in his veins, has become the wonder of our time. Its treasures, now gathered under the roof of the Cairo museum, are the astonishment of the world. Nothing like them has ever before been unearthed. If an insignificant and almost nameless kinglet like Tut-ankh-amen could be the object of an interment as magnificent as this, what must have been the mortuary honors of the real kings of Egypt, like Thothmes III and Rameses II?

The story of the nineteenth dynasty is familiar. Its important rulers were Seti I and Rameses II. The latter was

* Cf. James Baikie, *The Amarna Age*.

the builder and braggart of his race. He erected numberless structures in his own honor, decorated them with his statues, and covered them with honorific inscriptions. His long reign gave ample opportunity for military exploits, and these were the chief theme of his self-laudation. His scribes and poets spared no efforts to immortalize him, and these panegyrics, together with the preservation of his mummy in the Cairo treasure house, have contributed, perhaps unduly, to his posthumous fame.

His son, Merneptah, is supposed to have been the Pharaoh of the exodus, as Rameses was of the oppression. The account in Exodus 14 and 15 of the passage of the sea would appear to imply that he perished with his army. But his body was found with the others in the tombs of the kings, and is at the museum. In the fifth year of his reign he set up a tablet, purloined from the temple of Amenhotep III, on which he inscribed a hymn of victory over conquests he had recently made in Palestine. The mention of Israel on this stele is the only reference to the Hebrews thus far found on any Egyptian monument.

A notable monumental source for biblical students is found in the inscription of Sheshonk I of the twenty-second dynasty on the wall of the Temple of Amon at Karnak. This king was the Shishak of 1 Kings 14:25, and the story of his invasion of Palestine, of which one episode was the sack of Jerusalem in the reign of Rehoboam, brings vividly to mind that unhappy plundering of the city so recently enriched by Solomon.

Two other discoveries of archaeological material in Egypt have been of great value to students of the biblical

records. One is certain papyrus records from the island of Elephantine, near Assouan, showing that there was a Hebrew colony located there in the twenty-sixth dynasty, in the fifth century B.C., about contemporary with Nehemiah. The colonists there had a temple to Jahveh, and perhaps represented one of those migrational movements in search of safety which took many of that nation to other lands than Palestine. The other find which has proved of great interest was that of certain scraps of papyrus in the rubbish heaps of Oxyrhynchus, the ancient Greek name of the modern town of Behnesa, 123 miles south of Cairo, and some nine miles west of the Nile. Among these have been found the so-called " Sayings of Jesus," which since 1897 have been often cited as authentic words of the Lord.

The story of the opening of this immense hoard of Egyptian archaeological material to popular knowledge is too familiar to require detailed retelling. The discovery of the Rosetta Stone, at the Canopic mouth of the Nile, was the work of one of the engineers with Napoleon's expedition in 1799. It is a large block of black granite with three inscriptions, one in hieroglyphic, one in demotic, the shorter writing, and one in Greek. This trilingual inscription, a decree of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, 205–181 B.C., finally furnished the key which after many efforts opened to François Champollion the vast treasures of Egyptian lore. The list of scientists who have since wrought either at the task of excavation or of decipherment is long and impressive. Among them have been Lepsius, Mariette, Maspero, De Morgan, Naville, Petrie, Davies, Breasted, Carter and Reisner.

At the best the work of the archaeologist in Egypt is

not easy. There are always the five plagues, which might easily run to ten, as in Moses' day. These are the heat, sand, insects, bad water, and the unreliable character of the native help. But there is also the frequent exhibition of hostility on the part of the Egyptian government and the Egyptian department of antiquities, which is under French direction. It was the character of some of the conditions imposed by these officially placed guardians of Egyptian antiquities that caused the recent withdrawal of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s, generous offer of ten millions of dollars for the reconstruction of the Cairo museum and the erection of a scientifically organized school of archaeology and research in connection with it. This unfortunate episode is a great loss to science.

In spite of all difficulties encountered, however, a very large amount of work is proceeding. The Harvard-Boston expedition, under the direction of Dr. George A. Reisner, perhaps the most eminent of all American field Egyptologists, is carrying on work at Gizeh, near the pyramids. One royal tomb, supposed to be that of a queen in one of the earliest dynasties, has been discovered and excavated. The Philadelphia Museum has a force at work not far from the site of old Memphis. The Metropolitan Museum of New York has a permanent headquarters opposite Karnak and keeps something of a staff in residence. The University of Michigan has had an expedition at work on the Graeco-Roman ruins in the Fayyum. This force was under the direction of Professor Kelsey as long as he remained there. The Egyptian Exploration Fund is operating certain concessions at Abydos. And the Oriental Institute of the Uni-

versity of Chicago, of which Professor James Henry Breasted is director, is carrying forward its epigraphic work on the Temple of Rameses III at Thebes, usually known as the temple of Medinet Habu. This work is carried on from Chicago House near by, a residence and workshop, with a library of sizable proportions, the gift of Mr. Julius Rosenwald.

The story which has thus been told of Egypt in such summary and superficial manner could be duplicated regarding Assyria and Babylonia. There the conditions have been even more trying, both as regards climatic and governmental difficulties. Drenching rains alternating with scorching heat make work most exacting and are a continual menace to the perishable materials buried in the soil. To this was added the constant friction with officials under the Turkish régime, which in many cases put a premature end to promising excavations. This impediment has now happily been removed by the establishment of the British mandate, and the future appears full of promise.

As in the case of Egypt, the records of Mesopotamia were locked in an unknown tongue. Travelers had seen many inscriptions, and some materials of this nature had found their way to the laboratories of scholars. But they could not be read. For a long time it was known that old Persian inscriptions were to be seen upon the ruined walls of Persepolis. As long ago as Niebuhr's day the threefold character of these inscriptions was perceived. But not until Grotefend in 1802 hit upon the fact that these were actually three languages, the old Persian, the Median (or Susian) and the Babylonian, was the significance of the work as a key to

the cuneiform or wedge-shaped script of Babylonia comprehended. The next and most decisive step was taken in 1835 by Henry C. Rawlinson, an English officer with the Persian army in the Zagros mountains. He discovered a great inscription cut on the side of the Behistun Rock in western Persia, near the old Median highway between Hamadan and Kirmanshah. The former of these towns is the ancient Ecbatana, and both of them figured in the military operations of the world war. Rawlinson copied and translated five columns of this inscription, which were later sent to Europe and published in 1847. The trilingual inscriptions of Persepolis furnished the key to open to the world the treasures of Babylonian and Assyrian literature, even as the Rosetta Stone disclosed the secrets of Egypt.

The list of explorers and excavators in this part of the world is long and instructive. It includes the work of Botta at Kouyunjik and Khorsabad, near ancient Nineveh; Layard at Nimrud, the ancient Calah; Loftus at Warka, the site of Erech; Taylor at Mugheir, the Ur of the Chaldees of Abraham's day; Oppert at Hillah, the site of Babylon, and Birs Nimrud, the ancient Borsippa. In the course of these operations the former cities, temples, libraries and other important possessions of such kings as Sargon I, Esarhaddon son of Sennacherib, Ashurbanipal and Nebuchadrezzar II were brought to light. George Smith found the Flood account in 1872, and his work was continued by Rassam. Others who have been successful investigators in this field are de Sarzec, Peters, Ward, Haynes, Hilprecht, Koldeway, de Morgan, Andrae, Harper, Banks, Langdon, and Woolley. The important finds include the famous Black Obelisk of

Shalmaneser III, with its Jehu inscription, and great numbers of historical records of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings who had relations with Palestine and its people.

The removal of Turkish authority from this region has permitted the resumption of excavation at numerous points since the World War, and a school of oriental research is being established at Bagdad which gives promise of valuable results in the field of ancient Semitic culture.

A third important civilization which left its impress upon the entire fertile crescent and is often mentioned in the Old Testament is that of the Hittites. It shared with the empires on the Tigris and the Nile the dominion of the Near East between 2750 and 1200 B.C. Its territory covered most of Asia Minor, and its chief centers were at Boghaz-Keui, Carchemish, Mitanni and Hamath. Great quantities of archaeological material have been gathered, which when deciphered will reveal the facts regarding this powerful state. No bilingual inscription has as yet been found, however, and though many attempts have been made to find the clue to the puzzling script, none of them can be said to have succeeded completely. Scholars like Sayce, Winckler, Peiser, Jensen, Hogarth, Conder, Thompson, Garstang, Almsted and Woolley have made important contributions to our knowledge of this strange people. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago is carrying on work in this field, along with its other enterprises. Working at Alishar, 128 miles east of Angora, Mr. Von der Osten and members of his staff have penetrated through two strata of Turkish deposits, and through Greek and Roman ruins to beds of

Hittite remains containing much pottery. Fifty-five Hittite towns have been located in central Asia Minor.

Space does not permit consideration of the excavations in Greece and Asia Minor that have direct bearing upon New Testament problems. In Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Sardis, and several other cities mentioned in the early Christian records, much work has been done, with results of great value to biblical scholarship. Readers of Sir William Ramsay's works on St. Paul and on the churches of the Apocalypse know of the earlier stages of those researches, and later activities in these areas have widened the domain of New Testament investigation. Nor is it possible or necessary to speak of the remarkable discoveries made in the island of Crete, where the evidences of Minoan occupation have been found in abundance. However significant the influence of this civilization may have been upon the cultural life of Greece it was only indirectly exerted upon the peoples of the Levant, and that probably through Egyptian contacts. The tragedy of Knossos must have taken place before the end of the reign of Amenhotep III, about 1475 B.C., and the fall of the house of Minos cut off abruptly whatever intercourse there had previously been between the Cretans and the Egyptians. It was not until the reign of Rameses III of the twentieth dynasty (1198–1167 B.C.) that Cretans, later called Philistines, coming from Crete and Asia Minor, were repulsed from Egypt and obtained a foothold in Canaan, from which fact the Greeks learned to call it after them Palistia or Palestine. Later still David chose his bodyguard from among these non-Hebrew warriors, and they are known in the Old Testament as the Cherithites-

Pelithites, i.e., Cretans-Philistines. The secrets of this pre-Grecian culture are as yet locked up in the thousands of tablets written in the Minoan script, which like the Hittite records await a Champolleon for their full decipherment.

But the most interesting and important field for archaeological adventure is of course the Holy Land. And here the problems have been more baffling and the conditions more difficult than in any other terrain. It is a very little country, " the least of all lands," as it has been called, and its most important localities, historically, were in the highland regions along that great backbone of mountains that stretches from the Lebanons far down into the Tih desert. Naturally the heavy rains of the autumn and spring wash down the soil to the plains and valleys, and with it much of the material which might otherwise have proved of historical value.

Then it must be remembered that Palestine has been visited by severe earthquakes many times in its history. The Bible mentions some of these. The damage wrought by the visitation of 1927 in Jerusalem, Jericho, Nablus, and a number of other places is typical of the ravages occasioned by similar disturbances in the past. The land has suffered incalculably from war. Probably no section of the world's surface has seen more devastation through the centuries. Jerusalem has endured more than thirty conquests, all the way from David to Allenby. Some of the invaders have left their records on the rocks at Dog River, that autograph album of northern Palestine. The country was the bridge across which caravans and armies had to pass in going from Egypt to the lands of the east, and as such it suffered constantly from deliberate attack and casual raids. Devastation,

pillage, deforestation and fire were frequent experiences. It is not strange therefore that much of its testimony in buildings, monuments, tombs and more perishable materials should have suffered complete destruction. And the same official obstructive tactics which the excavators have met in other portions of the former Turkish domain have been encountered here, only in more aggressive form, as Palestine is one of the holy places to the Mohammedan as well as to the Jew and the Christian. In spite of all these hindrances something has been done to secure the testimony which the land holds in its keeping, and since the world war and the change from Turkish to British administration the prospects are excellent for a new era of research.

From the days of the Bordeaux Pilgrim the Holy Land has been visited by countless multitudes from all lands to which the Christian faith has gone. The narratives brought back stimulated desire to see the sacred sites and to add to their number. Queen Helena the mother of Constantine made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 326 A.D. to discover the true location of the Holy Sepulchre, and appears to have approved several of the fantastic stories which have been repeated through the centuries to the detriment of an accurate knowledge of the topography of ancient Jerusalem. The exploration of Palestine began with the work of Dr. Edward L. Robinson of New York in 1838. He prepared the first systematic description of the country under the title "Biblical Researches," in 1852. Others followed him, and in 1865 the "Palestine Exploration Fund," whose Quarterly Statements have been published regularly since that time, was organized in London. Under its direction Sir Charles

Warren made a survey of Jerusalem, and Colonel C. R. Conder and Colonel (later General Lord) Kitchener made a survey and map of western Palestine, which was published in 1880.

One of the results of the survey was the finding and distinguishing of many "tells" throughout the country. The tells are the mounds usually calling attention to the long abandoned cities or towns underneath. The mounds themselves consist of waste products, or earth washed down from higher places, completely covering the sites. The general characteristics of the cities thus unearthed are houses built of unfinished stone, put together with a mortar made of mud. Flat mud roofs were common, and when the houses fell apart the stones were used again on top of the fallen mud, forming a higher deposit. Street levels rose by accumulations of waste until a city might have raised itself many feet between its first establishment and its final abandonment. Eventually all of the stones would be taken elsewhere for building purposes until only the waste foundations would be left to show the cultures of successive generations.

Other records of abandoned cities are found in the "khirbehs," places showing one-time occupation but with no accumulation of waste and rubbish. Often the tells and khirbehs are quite close to one another, showing the probable abandonment of the tell for the khirbeh. Examinations of the tells have frequently told the story of various invasions. One stratum will have the coins and pottery of the Maccabees; one will show a Persian strain, another Amorite relics. The value of such stratification can easily be seen if it is studied layer by layer and not penetrated at unrelated points.

The serious work of excavation was begun by Professor Flinders Petrie, who arrived from Egypt in 1890 and started operations at Tell el-Hesy, which was found to be the ancient Lachish. He was followed in this enterprise by Dr. F. J. Bliss, who discovered the strata of eight cities on that site. This was veritably "The Mound of Many Cities," as he called it in his volume published in 1894. Dr. R. A. S. Macalister, during the years 1902–1909, undertook for the Fund the examination of Tell el-Jazar, the Gezer of the Old Testament, and the Gazara of the Crusaders. These excavations were the most complete and successful of any yet carried on. They disclosed strata of occupation from pre-Semitic cave-dweller days, 2500 B.C., down to the Mohammedan period. Bliss and Macalister also carried on work at Tell Zakariya (supposed to be the biblical Azekah), Tell es-Safi (believed to be the ancient Philistine city of Gath, and known to the Crusaders as Blanche-Garde), Tell el-Judeideh, unidentified as yet, and Tell Sandahanna (thought to be the town of Moreshah or Moresheth-gath, the home of the prophet Micah). Duncan Mackenzie investigated Ain Shems (Beth-shemesh) for the Fund in 1911–1912.

These activities led to the organization of other societies for research. As far back as 1878 the Deutsche Palastina-Verein began the publication of a journal. The École Biblique under the auspices of the Dominican order has excavated and published its results. The British School of Archaeology was founded a few years ago. The Austrians have a foundation. And the American School of Oriental Research, supported by the Archaeological Institute of America, has an admirable headquarters and library.

A few only of the more important excavations can be mentioned. Harvard University has carried on operations at Samaria for several years, under the direction of Professor D. G. Lyon, and later Dr. George A. Reisner. The foundations of the palaces of Omri and Ahab are among the important discoveries made. Askelon, the Philistine city, later famous in the story of the Crusades, has been investigated by Professor Garstang. The American School has carried on operations at Tell el-Ful, north of Jerusalem, a site believed to be the ancient Gibeah of Saul. The University of Pennsylvania began work in 1922 at Beisan, the biblical Beth-shean, and perhaps the Hellenistic Scythopolis. Mr. Clarence S. Fisher has been the director. Various strata have been penetrated, all the way from 2000 B.C. to 800 A.D. At the depth of about thirty feet he came upon the remains of a brick fortress of Seti I(1313–1292 B.C.), within which were commemorative stelae of Seti I and Rameses II, together with a seated statue of the latter king. The great finds there have been Egyptian temples of Thothmes III and Amenophis III, the foundations of both outside and partition walls being well preserved. A temple of Astarte was also found, supposed to be the one in which the Philistines exhibited the armor of Saul and Jonathan.[1] At Beit-in, the ancient Bethel, excavations have disclosed the city wall and pottery dating from the iron and bronze ages.

The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago has been carrying forward excavational work at Megiddo, the Armageddon of the Apocalypse. Some finds had already been turned up by earlier workers, among them a seal of a

[1] 1 Sam. 31:10.

man who calls himself the "Servant of Jeroboam," probably Jeroboam II. But a house has now been established there, and the work taken up in a systematic manner. Graves containing fine pottery, bronze implements and numbers of Egyptian scarabs, have been examined. Several valuable Babylonian seals have also been found. The finds so far give only a hint of the more important materials hoped for as the work goes on. Professor Bade, of the Pacific School of Religion, has carried on work at several points, chiefly of late at Nebi-Samwil, thought to be the ancient Mizpeh, where walls and other remains of the ancient town have been reached.

It should be mentioned that the work so long and faithfully prosecuted by the Franciscan fathers at Tell Hum has proved beyond question the authenticity of the site as the Capernaum of the times of Jesus. A synagogue, perhaps the very one mentioned in the Gospel of Luke, has been unearthed and in part reconstructed.

The announcement of a gift of two million dollars by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., for a new museum in Jerusalem has brought great satisfaction to all biblical students. It means much for the future of archaeological research in Palestine. The site selected is near the American School of Oriental Research.

The well-known finds of an earlier period, like the Siloam inscription, the Moabite Stone, the Madeba map, the Warning Stone, etc., need no comment. No new light appears to have been thrown upon the vexed question of the location of the scene of the crucifixion and the sepulchre of Jesus, except to deepen the conviction of scholars that neither

the Church of the Holy Sepulchre nor the so-called Gordon's Calvary and Garden Tomb, the objects of so much Christian emotion, have any evidence in their favor. As one recent writer says, "The only thing of which one can be sure is that none of these spots is authentic." In fact the connection of the name of the sainted General Gordon with the tradition of the Garden Tomb is pure fiction.

The cultural side of the discoveries made by the various workers is most interesting. In the last few years archaeologists all over the world have been digging and classifying their relics until they have a very general idea of the stages of culture through which the earth and its inhabitants have passed. In Palestine, excavations have shown that it too experienced the stone, bronze and iron ages. Records of this kind are brought to light with the finding of weapons and ornaments which correspond to those designated as belonging to the Paleolithic period in Europe and America.

A situation of peculiar interest to ethnologists is the apparent absence of the Neolithic period in this country. There seems to be no evidence of a culture earlier than that of the chipped flint tool stage. This is borne out by examination of strata all over the region. If this assumption is correct, the pottery commonly called Neolithic belongs to some other cultural period.

The tools found, while very rude in finish, cover a variety of uses. There are many sorts of knives, the early flat axe, bronze chisels, saws, scrapers of flint, pestles and grindstones. The saw is a comparatively refined tool and is found only in the higher cultures. A great variety of stone

hammers have been found, but few of metal. Nor have any files come to light, and but few awls and picks, and these of a late date.

An interesting subject is the unearthed wooden plow of prehistoric date which is very similar to the one used even yet in Palestine. A sickle was made of serrated iron flakes fastened in wood. The grindstone consisted of stones which fitted into each other, and which were rubbed together back and forth rather than with a rotary motion. Very little advance has been shown in the modernizing of the agricultural implements, a fact which gives an insight into the progress of the native Palestinian. Olive-presses and wine-presses are found in abundance. One reads of them in the Bible, and they evidently existed hundreds of years before its time. Their designs are various, some extremely simple and others more elaborate.

Among the weapons are found the coup-de-poing, one of the greatest inventions of primitive culture, the club of hard wood, and various shaped stones of varying weight and size, depending upon the prospective uses. Arrows are not very common, although in Europe they are plentiful. Many daggers and barbed spears have been found, the barbed instrument being another noteworthy invention. Bronze and iron arrowheads are not common, but when they are found are usually of the famous leaf design. It is interesting to note that the leaf-shaped sword found in Europe is unknown in Palestine.

Altogether, it seems that the culture of this area so far as tools and weapons are concerned is far below that of other localities. From Egypt came the famous potter's

wheel and the art of making bronze. But so far, no known culture has originated from the Palestinian region.

With the discussion of tools and weapons goes always the consideration of the pottery. The evolution in shape and design is clearly shown from the squat rounded vessels of elementary decoration and color to the graceful figures of fancy design, decorated before firing. It is of interest to note the abrupt decline in culture that occurred with the immigration of the Hebrews and their rule, involving the loss of grace and beauty. In the post-exilic time the culture again advances, this time showing direct evidence of the Greek influence and the consequent improvement. The pottery is decorated with better colors, more carefully baked and is of better shape and smoother finish. The abundance of wine jars shows the presence of an active wine trade. As time went on, pottery showed other tendencies; the Roman and Byzantine influence supplanted the Greek. There seems to have been no original Palestinian work; all was a result of other cultures. The Greek potters were wont to decorate their products with Greek letters, and these when copied by the Palestinian artisans soon became distorted and changed until they eventually evolved into conventional patterns and designs, having no significance whatever, another evidence of the unoriginality of Palestinian culture.

Caves as dwelling places are quite common now as in biblical times in Palestine. As in the cave dwellings in Mexico, the floors and walls reveal the level of the inhabiting people. In Mexico however the state of civilization was comparatively high. In Palestine it seems to have been of the crudest. Stone weapons and the poorest of pottery are

characteristic of these caves. In many instances, as at Beit Jibrin, the caves run back into tortuous passages extending long distances, the entrance of which might be far from the exit.

The city people however had houses of the type unearthed in the tells. Little more remains in any case than the foundation of what were probably low flat huts. The houses were partitioned into two or three rooms and were made of stones put together with mud mortar. The windows probably consisted of a sort of lattice-work. The roofs were made of mud and had to be refinished each year because of the damage done by rain and sun. Occasional brick houses have been found, the bricks being of a soft material and very large. As well as can be seen the houses are built surrounded by a high wall, ensuring privacy to the occupants. Cisterns, most important in a town without central water system, supplied two or three houses. Their size depended in great part upon the number to be supplied and upon the consistency of the ground through which they were bored. Many were bored twenty or thirty feet deep through rock; all were lined with a smooth cement to keep them water-tight.

In general the villages were composed of a number of houses, with cisterns and perhaps a shrine. It is seldom that other buildings have been found except in and around Jerusalem. All of the cities were protected by walls with gates and towers. The walls were of varying thickness from a few feet to as much as sixteen (that of Gezer) or twenty (that of the City of David). The stones composing the walls are generally huge and unornamented, and these walls were

built more strongly than the houses and were more frequently repaired, for upon the walls, of course, depended the safety of the inhabitants.

Excavations have revealed the great propensity of the early Palestinian for games of chance. Curiously enough, many examples of gaming tables of lined limestone are found, usually marked off more or less into squares or other shaped spaces. The " playing men " may have been small stones.

In so far as sanitation is concerned Palestine was as backward as in other things. During the period of Maccabean influence, it is true, a sort of pipe was made of jar tops fitted together so that the sewage was carried away from the house. In Jerusalem several more complicated drains were found, but these are an exception rather than the rule. The water supply was well attended to. Tunnels were cut through solid rock. At Gezer, for instance, the tunnel reached to 94 feet below the surface of the ground. Reservoirs, the so-called Solomon's Pools, really made in the time of Herod, were constructed near Jerusalem with aqueducts for the carrying of water to the city where it was kept in large community pools. It was essential to the safety of the people that their sources of water be within the city walls.

A discussion of the culture of an ancient people is not complete without some reference to the writing existent. No one script has ever had exclusive use in Palestine. It was at first supposed that the old Hebrew script did not exist before 1000 B.C The finding of certain tablets, however, leads students to believe that this script was used at least as early as Rameses II, and that it was then deteriorating, thus

arguing its better form even centuries earlier. There are several references to writing and if this is true the art of writing must have been more common then than it was centuries later. The only records of writing still remaining, of course, are in the stone tablets, the manuscripts of papyrus having long since disintegrated and disappeared. Calendars have been found as have limestone coffins with the name of the deceased on the outside. This last shows a rather higher state of civilization than seems to be the general level of Palestine.

Of great value to the excavator are the tombs. It is unfortunate that they have been the objects of the thieving depredations of natives, and it is not unlikely that many valuable evidences of extinct culture have been lost. Various were the devices used by the families of the deceased to keep the grave intact, usually without avail. Tourists pay a high price for any sort of relic, with the consequent result that the graves are denuded of all pottery, gold, ornaments and whatever else was found. Still it is possible to distinguish the types of tombs used.

Those of the Canaanites are mostly natural caves, with an occasional shaft to mark a grave. In these tombs have been found pottery, knives and ornaments of bronze, all of an inferior type. The Hebrew tombs consisted of small rooms hewed in the rocks with benches cut into the wall on which the bodies were probably placed. So far the graves uncovered have been poor in quality and offerings, and it seems unlikely that they belong to the richer classes.

A more elaborate tomb fashioned after the Egyptian style was unearthed near Silwan, and is called the " Egyp-

tian tomb" because of this marked influence. During the Maccabean and Ptolemaic periods the tombs consisted of small flat rooms with the opening at the top through which people dropped to the floor below. The bodies were set in rows and the offerings were again of poor quality. Later on the tombs were more artistic in decoration, another result of the Greek influence. On these later tombs were often found sculptured slabs bearing figures of animals and men. The Tell Barak sarcophagus shows a high type of decorative ability worthy of the later Roman art.

Students have been much interested to see if the products of excavation in any way confirm the biblical accounts of religious progress. The evidence is not, of course, complete, but as far as it goes there seems to be an accord between it and the Bible. In many places that would produce a wealth of evidence could it be secured, there is some sacred shrine or graveyard whose removal would enrage the natives. This is true of the mount of Gezer which is now a graveyard. Excavators believe that below could be found letters and records, but they are as yet inaccessible.

References are found to the high places, the sanctuaries of religious hermits or fanatics, or shrines where offerings were placed. At Tell-es-Safi there are ruins which might easily have been one of these places. Three large stones were standing together facing towards the semicircular northern wall. Off one side were several smaller rooms, an arrangement suggesting the use of ceremonies and ritual. At Gezer was found a more elaborate ruin of the same general type but with stones that had evidently been brought from another region. It is hard to tell what ceremonies were per-

formed at these shrines. The finding of phallic emblems may be the keynote to them. At any rate the prophets were loud in their denunciations of the high places; but that they persisted to the destruction of Jerusalem is certain. The ancient Semites like other primitive peoples had their personal and national gods whom they worshiped. There was the goddess of fertility, the god who looked after cattle, the one who cared for the crops. One of the most common forms for the god-image was that of the bull, which was supposed to be the protector of cattle and other animals.

The Bible speaks much of sacrifices, and excavations have revealed a number of altars which had evidently been used for that purpose. The gods in return for their watchful care over the crops and livestock were repaid with gifts. Other primitive people gave to the gods the first of their crops, their animals and their children, and so did the Semites. Remains have been found of young babies a day or so old deposited in jars and buried under thresholds and near the altar places. Whether they were killed for that purpose is not known, but it is probable that human sacrifice was practiced. Probably these foundation offerings were intended to insure the welfare of the household.

Numerous amulets of various kinds have been found, and in the remains of houses, door-post deities and other household gods have been uncovered. In the ruins of these buildings one probably finds the origin of our custom of laying a corner stone in a new building. The original ceremony perhaps called for the killing of a human being, either a slave or a child, and the placing of the body under a corner of the edifice to ward off the evil spirits and cause

the gods to bless the house and its future occupants. At a later date, animals were used instead of human beings. In both cases it was not unusual for the sacrifice to be buried alive instead of first being killed. The modern corner stone deposit is no doubt a survival of this custom, but in the age of the early Semites the living sacrifices were used.

Using their cultural history as a background, it is surprising that a religion with the high ethical values of the Hebrew should have come from such a humble source. Perhaps it could not be expected that one country should excel in more than one thing. To be the mother country of the monotheistic religions would be enough honor for any civilization. Perhaps in the future other discoveries will be made that will cast a different light upon the early life of these people, and it is to be hoped that the prosecution of archæological researches in the interest of biblical knowledge will be rewarded by even more valuable discoveries than have yet been made.

XII

RISE AND LITERATURE OF JUDAISM

The story of the Jews and Judaism is intimately connected with biblical interests, although strictly speaking neither the Old Testament nor the New relates primarily to the Jewish people. The Old Testament is the surviving literature of the Hebrew race during the time in which Hebrew was a living tongue and to a limited extent in the period in which that language was yielding to Aramaic and Greek. In that later time Judaism was in its beginnings. Hebrew life, the political and religious movement that began with the arrival of the tribes in Canaan about 1250 B.C. came gradually to its close with the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the consequent dispersion of the nation into Babylonia, Egypt and other sections of the Near East.

Already in 722 B.C. the national life of the Hebrews had been dealt a severe blow by the conquest of Samaria by the Assyrians and the collapse of the kingdom of Israel. The people of the northern kingdom were not greatly disturbed territorially by this event, but they lost their status as a nation, and the country became a province of the empire, with a mixed population whose descendants were known as Samaritans, and a small group of whom remain to the present time. At that time the Hebrew people as a political unit found itself reduced to the small territory of Judah

with its center at Jerusalem. When that city was destroyed by the Babylonians there was nothing left of the old national enterprise save the forlorn and scattered fragments of the population, such portions of the Hebrew Scriptures as had thus far taken form, and the memories of the past now gone forever.

A half century later, when some of the scars of the tragedy had healed, and the control of the world had passed by the conquests of Cyrus from Semitic to Indo-European hands, the shattered group in Judah gathered a measure of courage, and began to dream of a new beginning. Already they were taking the name of Jews, from their little province in the south of Palestine. In such passages as 2 Kings 16:6 and 25:25 the word is used of inhabitants of the old southern kingdom, who might well have borne it at any time after the fall of Samaria. It is used in that sense in several of the later passages in Jeremiah. Under the influence of such local leaders as the prophets Haggai and Zechariah they set about the reconstruction of the temple on a very modest scale, and from that time there was a slow and rather discouraging revival of Jerusalem. The related people in other lands who had been deported or had taken refuge abroad were also known as Jews, as one learns from such late documents as Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra and Daniel.

The relation of this widely scattered people to the ancient Hebrews became of course increasingly remote in time, locality and kinship. From the first the Hebrew tribes had been little concerned with racial integrity. While they probably shared the general tendencies to endogamy discovered in most racial groups, they had from the first

freely intermarried with the Canaanites and other tribes found in Canaan, and gradually absorbed them. Naturally they had their prejudices against other peoples, like the neighboring nations. But that did not prevent a sufficient degree of amalgamation to make the claim of pure Hebrew blood largely a fiction. It was the rapid growth of the narrower tendency in the period of the revival of Judah that led to drastic efforts at exclusiveness during the period of Nehemiah and Ezra. But the success of the attempted reform was limited, and the tradition of tribal integrity and racial purity among the Jews is rather an ideal and a romance than a reality.

Considering the largely imaginary nature of that racial integrity of which so much has been made, both by Jewish and non-Jewish writers, it is necessary only to add that the connection between the Hebrews of the Old Testament and the Jews of the Roman and the later Christian periods is of the most tenuous nature. The modern Jew is as little related to the Hebrew race that produced the writings of the prophets and the sages of Israel as is the modern Greek of Macedonia to the Athenian of the days of Pericles, or the modern Italian to the Roman of the classic age. Indeed far less. For in the case of the present-day Greek or Italian there is a certain continuity of geographical location and linguistic inheritance which in the case of the Jew is quite lacking.

The Hebrew language began to pass away as a living tongue with the fall of Jerusalem. It gradually gave place to Aramaic in Palestine. In the lands of the dispersion the local tongues were adopted. Greek, widely spread by the conquests of Alexander, became the common literary tongue

of Jews as well as of other races. The Jews scattered throughout the world in later days naturally adopted the speech of their environment. But the tongue that has characterized them for some centuries is known as the Yiddish, a name derived from Judah, but actually a composite language, partaking of elements of German, Russian and Spanish, with slight admixture of Hebrew and English, and written in the Aramaic alphabet that superseded the Hebrew.

There is no need to claim for the Jew a fictitious racial inheritance. He has quite enough credit of another sort. His contributions to world thinking and activity have been sufficient to assure him a place in the sun. He does not require the borrowed glory of another race. It is therefore a misuse of terms to speak of the Hebrews of the Old Testament period as Jews, just as it is quite unhistorical to apply the term Hebrew to the modern Jew. It is true that some writers who deal with the religion of Israel speak of it as Judaism, and allow the term to describe the entire sweep of both Hebrew and Jewish history. But this practice cannot be defended on any grounds of historical exactness. Hebrew history and religion find their place in the centuries that saw Israel carrying on the enterprises of political and religious life in Palestine down to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and to a constantly diminishing degree in the centuries that followed. The nation was gone, and while ardent spirits cherished the dream of a restoration of its former glory, these dreams prove frustrate. To record the story of the past, and even to face the advent of new ideas, new speech and new religious institutions with the spasmodic efforts of apocalypticism and the imitation of the classic form of writing,

was all that remained to a generation that had seen the collapse of the prophetic order and the disappearance of the temple service. During the same period another movement was taking form, a movement so different in character that it received scant attention from the survivors of the older régime, and based its procedure on wholly distinct principles.

The great dispersion began early and continued either in periodic impulses or in gradual and continuous migration throughout the history. From the times of the first tribal settlements in Canaan in the days of the patriarchs the Hebrews moved easily and frequently into other lands. Echoes of this tendency are found in the early narratives, usually in the form of individual adventures, but in reality carrying the implication of clan movements. Such departures into the desert regions south and east,[1] the highlands of Aram,[2] Egypt,[3] Philistia,[4] Moab,[5] etc., though represented as personal experiences of Hebrew leaders, certainly hint at more general and permanent removals.

The period of sojourn of some of the Hebrew clans in Egypt is not known, but the exodus, though pictured as a mass movement carrying all the people along, probably left a considerable body of Hebrews in Egypt, and dropped others along the road of the pilgrimage in the regions of Sinai-Horeb, Midian and the East Jordan country. In later days trading opportunities took Hebrews to other lands,[6] and probably led to permanent groups in those outer regions.

The greater dispersions, of course, came in the days of Assyrian and Babylonian supremacy. When Samaria was

[1] Gen. 25:1–6; [2] Gen. 28:10; [3] Gen. 39:1; 46:6, 7; [4] Ex. 20:1; 24:34; 26:1; [5] Ruth 1:1; 1 Sam. 22:3, 4; [6] See e.g. 1 Kings 20:34.

taken by Sargon in 721 B.C., following the usual policy of expatriation, the Assyrians evidently removed those of the people who were most likely to prove troublesome if left in the land. They were taken to new regions in the east, and the conquerors brought in people from their other provinces, so that the mixed population would lose its integrity and the backbone of rebellion would be broken. From the critical standpoint of the later Judean prophets who wrote the record, these Israelites of the north were totally removed from the land on account of their sins.* This is evidently too long a bow to draw. It was never the policy of the conquering nations to go to the trouble and expense of transferring entire populations. Their plan was rather to break the spirit of the peoples they subdued by destroying their sense of unity, their institutions and their traditions. It is not probable that any considerable proportion of the people of Israel was actually transported to Assyria. In that sense the "ten lost tribes" were never "lost." They lost out, they were reduced to a subject condition, and were forced into contact with people they despised.† But as time passed assimilation took place. And even the strict and orthodox Jews of later days who regarded their descendants, the Samaritans of their time, with bitter aversion, were compelled to make a distinction between these half brethren of theirs and the

* Notice the long and explicit review of this episode and its causes by the writers of 2 Kings 17. As they told the story the entire population of Northern Israel was replaced by strangers.

† The fantastic guesses of Anglo-Israelism and other speculative theories which discover the ten tribes in other lands and different periods are of course baseless. They are as little credible as the discovery of mystic and prophetic values in the dimensions of the great pyramid, or the construction of a program of human history from Daniel and the Apocalypse.

world of pagan heathenism outside.* That the number of Hebrews taken to the east was relatively small is further probable from the fact that no literature later than the Priest Code is known to have taken form among them, and no traditions have survived of their having any place in later history. In this they were less fortunate than their brethren of the Judean dispersion after the fall of Jerusalem.

That dispersion, which had already begun ten years earlier in 597, when a considerable body of Judeans of whom the young Ezekiel was a member, was taken eastward, was brought to its tragic consummation in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadrezzar besieged the city and left it in ruins. Apparently the impulse to find refuge from Babylonian vengeance took the unhappy people in all directions. As in the case of northern Israel, some of them were taken to Babylonia, for the same reasons that had led to the deportation of the Israelites to Assyria. Many went to Egypt, that inviting asylum of the oppressed in all ages. There they multiplied and their numbers were increased by additional migrations at intervals. Two centuries later Jewish mercenaries and merchants were settled in various parts of Egypt in communities like that of Elephantine, far to the south, on the borders of Nubia, where a temple was built and sacrifices were offered to Ya'u or Jahveh.

Probably the majority of the population of Judah was left unmolested in the land. They were not considered worth taking away. Even Jeremiah counted them as but

* This is shown by the fact that although the first Jewish Christian preachers refrained scrupulously from preaching the gospel to Gentiles (Act 11:19), it was not regarded as a breach of propriety when the message was proclaimed among the Samaritans (Acts 8:1–25).

chaff compared with the wheat that had departed. That remnant in Judah was further reduced by internal troubles and by encroachments from outside. The Nabateans pushed into the south of the province, and the Samaritans, occupying the ancient territory of Israel, encroached on the north.

When the conqueror Cyrus took Babylon in 538 B.C. and issued his famous decree permitting the expatriates in his empire to return to their homes and rebuild their institutions, it might well be supposed that the descendants of the Hebrew exiles would instantly close with the opportunity and return *en masse*. But they did nothing of the sort. Why should they? A half century had passed since their fathers left the shores of the Mediterranean. They were living in a world of wealth and culture as compared with little Palestine. Under the urgent pleadings and confident assurances of the Second Isaiah and of Ezekiel, a few of them did make the adventure. But this was rather a sacrificial and heroic missionary exploit than a popular movement. The total number of those who came from the east during the next two centuries was comparatively small, as is shown by the census lists in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7. There is no indication that a single one of those who went out from Jerusalem in the day of its fall ever returned.

In truth the impulse to undertake the revival of Judah and to rebuild the temple came from within the little community of Judah itself. Those who came in the two or three groups with Sheshbazzar [7] and the two leaders Zerubbabbel and Joshua [8] were few in numbers and helped but little in the enterprise. The hopes so often expressed that a

[7] Ezra 1:5–11; [8] Ezra 3:1–13.

great company of patriotic Hebrews would arrive and push forward the restoration of the city were largely illusory. The Chronicler and his contemporaries writing at a much later time evidently took this optimistic view of the history. But the very documents which he incorporated in his narrative, including the journals of Nehemiah and Ezra, give a different aspect to the matter.

It was the native leaders Haggai and Zechariah who stirred the people of the province to the enterprise of rebuilding the temple. It is significant that these two prophets always speak of their fellow Hebrews in the vicinity of the site of Jerusalem as "the remnant," i.e., the people who were left in Judah when the dispersion took place.[9] To them they made their appeals to take up the work of rebuilding the temple. Apparently they used the political figure of Zerubbabel, a survivor of the royal line, and the priestly authority of Joshua at their full value. But they received little actual assistance from these weak leaders. By constant and insistent effort they secured the building of the temple, whose modest dimensions and meager equipment contrasted so pathetically with the glory of Solomon's structure.[10]

After the completion of this building in 516 B.C. silence falls over the scene. At rare intervals a little light is let in by such documents as Malachi, whose picture is gloomy enough, and perhaps some of the Psalms. But the days were evil and the times were out of joint. Conditions in Judah were increasingly desperate. When the little deputation of Hebrews made the journey to Susa in 445 B.C. to intercede

[9] See Hag. 1:12, 14; 2:2, 4; Zech. 7:5, etc.; [10] Ezra 3:12, 13.

with the only man who seemed able to help them, Nehemiah the Jewish chamberlain of Artaxerxes I (465–424 B.C.), they reported to him "concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity and concerning Jerusalem. And they said, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire." [11] The term "Jews" is used in this and similar passages in its geographical sense, as relating to the people of the province of Judah.

With patriotic devotion Nehemiah requested from his sovereign the difficult and thankless post of viceroy in Judah, and by his extraordinary ability, enthusiasm and generosity rallied the people to the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem and the most obvious and necessary civic reforms. Soon after Ezra arrived with a group of priests and Levites, bringing with him from the east the latest revision of the law, that body of institutes which is generally known as the Priest Code.[12] This seems to have been in 397 B.C., the seventh year of Artaxerxes II (404–358). Full of zeal for the correction of the manners and the practices of the community, in harmony with the rules adopted by the stricter Hebrew schools of the further orient, Ezra set himself at once to the work of moral and liturgical reform. His discovery that the people of Judah were freely intermarrying with the non-Hebrews among them filled him with dismay, coming as he did from scribal circles in Persia where the expansion and elaboration of the laws of the past was the chief employment. The laws against intermarriage with

[11] Neh. 1:1–3; [12] Ezra 7:1–28.

other nationalities such as were embodied in the Deuteronomic code were not rigorous, but were generally in harmony with the custom of endogamy prevailing among many peoples. They were never enforced, and like other specifications of the code, were treated rather as ideals than mandates. The protests made against the practice by prophets like Malachi [13] and officials like Nehemiah [14] seem to have been prompted by the social injustice done the Hebrew women of the small community by the men who took wives from neighboring districts rather than from their own group.

In Ezra's efforts to create a strictly segregated social unit wholly free from the admixture of gentile elements he met strong opposition and achieved little success. The people were as much surprised and puzzled by his outbreak of reforming zeal as he had been by their ignorance or indifference concerning the principle of separatism. But he carried on and intensified the movement looking to strict nationalism, begun as far back as the days of Ezekiel and carried to greater lengths by Joel, to make of their people a strictly exclusive community, with no relations with other races. This was of course impossible. The Hebrew race with its free customs of intermarriage had now practically disappeared into many lands. A different race was coming into being, an amalgam of many stocks and somewhat more inclined under its new leadership to tribal exclusiveness, legal correctness and ritualistic conformity. The things that bound it to the Hebrew tradition were precisely the elements that entered deeply into the other two later monotheistic religions — Christianity and Mohammedanism.

[13] 2:10, 11; [14] 13:23–27.

Those fundamentals were a profound belief in the God who had revealed himself to the prophets, and a deep reverence for the Scriptures which the prophets, priests and sages of Israel had transmitted to them. In three different directions these daughter faiths of Hebraism took their way. Judaism was first in time, soon followed by Christianity, and later by Islam. From that ancient and venerable literature of the Old Testament descended three daughter literatures. First of them Christianity produced its body of writings which we know as the New Testament and which dated from the first and earlier part of the second centuries. Second, Judaism, gradually consenting to commit its oral teachings to written form and organizing its Talmud from the second to the sixth centuries A.D. And third, Islam with its Koran, drawn both from biblical and Talmudic sources and taking form virtually in a single literary impulse in the seventh century of our era.

Judaism has a noble history, and has achieved notable results. It has made sufficient contributions to morality and religion to entitle it to a place of honor among the world's great faiths. Of course it gains nothing from fictitious claims to identity with the religion of Israel, and its history is in a totally different compartment of human annals. As the Hebrew state collapsed with the Babylonian conquest of the holy city, and the institutions of Hebrew life declined with the loss of the temple, the abandonment of sacrifice and other priestly offices, the people who still clung to the national faith turned to the production of a literature that should preserve as much as possible of their former ideals from destruction. The years that followed the catastrophe

of 586 B.C. witnessed the writing of some of the most important portions of the Old Testament. Prophecy burst forth into its finest flowering in the oracles of the Second Isaiah. Poets and psalmists were moved to their noblest efforts. The prophetic narratives of earlier times were gathered up and given fresh exposition. Priestly recitals and laws were expanded and reinterpreted. But it was the expiring breath of the Hebrew genius. More and more prophecy yielded to apocalypticism and priestly comment to scribism and ritual elaboration. The Hebrew speech gradually gave way to Aramaic, and at last to Greek. The nation had vanished from its place in history, and a new movement, a new culture and a different body of ethical and religious teaching succeeded.

There was no moment at which the historian could say, This is the end of the Hebrew life; now comes Judaism. The two movements were for a time contemporary, Hebraism declining to its end, and Judaism rising to significance. That was the condition during the Persian period and into the days of Macedonian rule. Hebrew voices were still heard, as in the final writings of prophets, sages and psalmists. But the synagogue was already taking its place as the center of worship in the Jewish world; the struggle of orthodoxy with hellenism was bringing in new speculations and doubtful philosophies. The brilliant achievements of the new Jewish race under their Maccabean leaders opened the way for a brief return of political power which seemed to revive the hopes for a restoration of ancient Hebrew royalty. But all the movements of the age took a different direction. The Jewish parties, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes,

and in later days the Herodian partisans and the nationalists or Zealots, took their different attitudes on the important interests of the time. The Pharisees were the puritans of the age, emphasizing the necessity of knowledge of the law, especially the oral law that was the prized possession of the rabbinical schools, and could not be committed to writing. The Sadducees, the owners of the rich temple franchises, and the group to which belonged the priesthood, hoped to secure nationalism by skillful intrigue, while the Zealots were ready to attempt it by force against the hated Romans.

Meantime Jerusalem that had struggled through many years of difficulty, described by the author of Daniel as the "sixty-two weeks of years in which it was rebuilt with street and moat, but in troublous times,"[15] came to its greatest glory in the reign of Herod the Idumean favorite of Rome, who rebuilt the temple, erected palaces and walls, and made of it a real capital. In those years when Jesus was growing into manhood among the hills of Galilee, Judaism reached its most opulent estate. The population of Jerusalem was larger than ever before. Proselytes came to the feasts and swelled the ranks of the believers. Earnest efforts were made by Jewish teachers both to connect their new enterprise with the ancient Hebrew faith and to interpret their religion in terms more acceptable to men of the Greek type. The severities of the Mosaic rules were modified in favor of a more cosmopolitan spirit.* Philo (20 B.C.–40 A.D.) was applying the allegorical method to the Old Testament, and attempting

* The Jewish zeal for securing proselytes was the theme of one of the half ironical comments attributed to Jesus (Matt. 23:15).

[15] Dan. 9:25.

to show that the Hebrew Scriptures contained the highest principles of the Greek philosophy. He also struck the note of mysticism in his writings that appealed to new types of mind now for the first time interested in the Jewish religion. In a very true sense Philo divides with Ezekiel and Ezra the honor of being the founders of Judaism.

Meantime the dispersion of Jews continued. They went out from Palestine as mercenary soldiers in the Roman armies. They were lured into far lands by opportunities for trade. The founders of new cities offered inducements to citizenship which appealed to them. Then there was always the danger of trouble in Palestine. Messianic hopes were kindled by a succession of claimants to that title. During three centuries a score of movements in behalf of one and another of these pretenders excited the people and brought down upon their promoters the heavy hand of Roman power. All these events were factors in the continuing dispersion of Jews, and their enforced absorption to a marked degree into the populations among which they were cast. That they maintained their identity and separateness at all is astonishing, considering the vicissitudes through which great numbers of them passed. In spite of these difficulties however Jewish communities took root and flourished in most of the chief cities of the Graeco-Roman world. Many thousands of them were scattered through Persia and Babylonia as is indicated in the book of Esther, which, though it is probably pure fiction, is based on a general sentiment regarding Jewish conditions in the east. Jewish schools flourished there as had those of Hebrew character in the times of Ezra. The best work of the scribes in commentation

upon the law took form in Babylonia. In later days the Babylonian Talmud was much larger than that of Jerusalem. In Alexandria two-fifths of the population was said to be Jewish. In the cities of Europe Jews were living in large numbers. One whole section of Rome beyond the Tiber was occupied by Jews. And similar colonies of that race were found in Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi and other cities of the west. The apostle Paul was a product of the Diaspora, or dispersion, being born in Tarsus a Roman city of Cilicia, and the story of his ministry is full of contacts with Jews in the various places he visited. Like others of his racial group he insisted that the Jews of his time were the rightful heirs of the ancient Hebrew traditions. His first preaching everywhere was done in the synagogues, and only when his Jewish brethren refused him audience did he turn to gentile hearers.

The final tragedy of the Jewish state came with the war into which fanatical leaders plunged the nation in the years 69 and 70 A.D. Josephus the Jewish historian of that period has left the record of that futile struggle of the Jews in Palestine against the power of Rome. The city was taken by Titus and completely destroyed. Many thousands of its people, and of Jews from other lands who had come to the city to attend the annual feast, perished in that catastrophe. On the ruins of Jerusalem there rose a Roman city in a later time, and many times since has it been besieged, captured, dismantled and rebuilt. But the Jewish possession passed with that event of the year 70 A.D. Through the long centuries of its history Jerusalem has been held by Jebusites, Hebrews, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Jews, Romans,

Parthians, Arabs, Crusaders, Turks and Syrians, and since the world war it is under a Christian mandate held by Great Britain. None of these races has held it for any considerable period, though the Hebrew people came nearest to an enduring title. Palestine belongs to all the nations by right of their religious interest in it. Christians, Jews and Moslems alike regard it as a holy land. All should have the right of pilgrimage and residence there. None of them can very well maintain a claim to Palestine as a "homeland," unless it is the Arab-Syrian population, which comprises nine-tenths of the inhabitants today. The people who nervously search the Bible for predictions of the "return of the Jews to Palestine" are spending their time in vain.

The Jews have the same rights in Palestine as all other people, the same and no more. In the long stretch of the years they only occupied it for some three centuries, and that so long ago that other races have taken title to the land by right of occupation. The modern Jew can do very much to improve conditions in the holy land, and to advance the status of those Jews of the Sephardic and Askenazim groups who live as pensioners upon the charity of their more energetic brethren in the west. Admirable agricultural settlements are fostered by Jewish philanthropy in various sections of the country. Jewish educational interests are projecting schools that will be of value to the land and to the Jewish people throughout the world. Engineering projects promise to increase the fertility of the soil. And Palestine will always be an inviting field for the commercial Jew as well as others who can furnish facilities and commodities to the host of visitors from all lands who are

attracted to Syria by religious interest, or the desire to pursue studies in biblical archaeology and history on the ground, or are merely casual tourists. But the great majority of Jewish people are in no way interested in Palestine save as a remote and vague memory of their race. Its little area would at the best accommodate only some million and a half of the fifteen millions which they number, and most of them have no desire to migrate there. They prefer to approve in a mild way the departure of other Jews to Palestine, while they themselves remain in the more congenial and profitable lands of the gentiles.

The literature of Judaism began in the third and second centuries B.C. Its first manifestation was in the latest books of the Old Testament, such as Daniel, Koheleth (Ecclesiastes) and the Song of Songs, together with the Apocalypse of Enoch and the later apocalypses found among the apocryphal books. Its next expression was the translation of the Hebrew books of the Old Testament into Greek. This enterprise was an accommodation to the growing Jewish population of Egypt to whom the Hebrew was an unknown tongue, and it was fostered by the Egyptian Pharaoh, Ptolemy Philadelphus. The process extended over a period of nearly a hundred and fifty years, from 285 to 130 B.C. This translation is called the Septuagint, "the Seventy," or LXX, from the tradition that it was made by seventy Jewish scholars, or perhaps that the project was sanctioned by the Egyptian Jewish Assembly of seventy members. The different portions of the work show differing degrees of accuracy in the translations. Some parts were so poorly done that later translations like those of Theodotian and Lysimachus were

substituted for them. The LXX includes not only the books of the Old Testament but as well a number of the apocryphal books written in Greek and regarded by the more liberal Alexandrian Jews as Holy Scripture. Among the books of this class are Esdras, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Jesus Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), the rest of Esther, Judith, Tobit, Baruch, the Epistle of Jeremiah, Susanna, the Song of the Three Holy Children,[16] Bel and the Dragon, 1 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees, and in some manuscripts 4 Maccabees. Some of these are known to have been written in Hebrew (e.g., Ecclesiasticus), but the current version was in Greek.

The work of scribal commentation upon the law had gone on continuously in the schools of the east and in those in Palestine, such as Tiberias and Jamnia. In these schools the oral law was developed, which was believed to contain the teachings of the leading rabbis regarding the ancient Mosaic law. This body of comment was not committed to writing, but was held as the esoteric possession of eminent teachers and their pupils. Fresh translations of portions of the Old Testament were made, e.g., by Aquila, whose work conformed more strictly to the Hebrew text than did the Septuagint, which was regarded as the Bible of the gentiles. With Rabbi Akiba in the second century A.D. began the writing of the oral law to secure its accuracy and preservation, and in this period as well the Hebrew text of the Old Testament was standardized and the variant forms suppressed, an unfortunate process similar to that which befell the Koran in a later day.

[16] To follow Dan. 3.

The plan of the emperor Hadrian in 132 A.D. to build a temple to Jupiter on the site of the former temple, in the Roman city of Aelia Capitolina where Jerusalem had once stood, led to a fresh war with Rome which ended with the overthrow of Simon bar Cokeba or Cozeba, the latest of the messianic claimants, who affirmed that he was the promised "star out of Jacob." [17] When this outbreak was suppressed in 135 A.D. the rabbinical schools were proscribed for a time, and many Jews fled the country to escape Roman persecution. The anti-foreign reaction that followed brought to a close the effort to proselyte non-Jews. The conservative rabbis increasingly disapproved of the practice, and the rapid spread of Christianity in the Graeco-Roman world rendered it less and less effective. Since that time Judaism has largely ceased to be a missionary religion.

As the hopes of nationalism faded the retreat to the law was more and more the order of the day. Of the two objects of Jewish devotion — the Temple and the Torah, — the Building and the Book — only the latter remained, and it elicited an ever increasing loyalty and love. The real sanctuary was now the synagogue and the school. The temple was a memory and was replaced by repentance and good works. The Sanhedrin had disappeared, the Sadducees and the priesthood were no more. But the ideals of Pharisaism, the life of prayer, alms-giving, fasting and the study of the Torah continued, and their moral authority was greater than ever. The ancient festivals were still observed, the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms were employed

[17] Num. 24:17.

in the service, and a new ritual was developed in place of the ancient temple rubrics.

By the end of the second century A.D. the new codification of the law was well along. In its developed form it was called the Mishna, the "repetition" and amplification of the ancient legal code of the Old Testament. From the days of Ezra it had been taking form as an oral tradition of comment and interpretation. It was the teaching of the rabbis that the law revealed to Moses was both written and oral, and the Mishna purported to be the sum of both. Under the directing hand of Rabbi Prince Judah the leading scholar of the age it was brought to the form which it held for several centuries. The process of committing the Mishna to writing was slow and hesitant. The rabbis disliked the plan of putting it in written form which seemed to make it more common and accessible to the untrained. But the process went on nevertheless and was completed by the sixth century. The commentaries on the Mishna that were gradually produced made up the Gamara, and the two combined formed the Talmud, the "learning" of the synagogue and its schools.

Meantime the debates on the law had gone on for centuries in Jewish schools, both conservative and liberal. Such men as Hillel, a scholar from Babylonia, and his grandson Gamaliel, the teacher of Saul of Tarsus, were of the liberal type. Shammai, a contemporary of Hillel, was of the conservative order. Discussions were held continuously over the meaning of the law.

Reports of these discussions were codified in the two Talmuds, the Palestinian and the Babylonian. The former

dates from the early part of the fifth Christian century, and the latter from the end of that period. Of the two the Babylonian Talmud was much more voluminous and authoritative. It was the final source of appeal on disputed points. Other writings of the early Christian age were the Jubilees, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Psalms of Solomon, and the Sibylline Oracles. This literature was not in favor with the rabbis, and in the second century was condemned by them, and preserved only among Christians.

By the year 425 A.D. the Jewish schools in Palestine, the remnant of Jewish influence in the holy land, died out, and by the sixth century those in Babylon had come to their eclipse. In other parts of the world the Jews passed through various fortunes. Under the Roman emperors their situation changed with the government. Often there were severe restrictions placed upon them, and at other times they were protected. In Persia their estate was more tolerable, though there were times of persecution for them there. But learning and culture declined with the loss of civic rights and the still greater dispersion of the race. As they felt the hand of oppression and were compelled more and more in the lands of the stranger to seek protection by living in the restricted ghettos which were both prison and refuge, they turned with even greater ardor and devotion to the law and the ritual. They developed a system of speculative interpretation of the Scriptures based upon the mystical values of numbers, and called the cabala. A great body of literature grew out of these manipulations of the science of numbers as applied to the Hebrew writings. Such speculations

greatly influenced some of the learned men of the Middle Ages, such as Pico della Mirandola, the friend and counsellor of Lorenzo di Medici, who professed that he discovered all the Christian doctrines in the Jewish cabala, and translated some of that literature into Latin for the use of scholars. Another who drank of the same fountain was Johann Reuchlin, the first European scholar to introduce the study of Hebrew into a university curriculum.

That the Jewish people have survived the difficult experiences through which they have passed and have produced the scholars and statesmen who have been the glory of their race is one of the marvels of history. No people has ever suffered more cruel treatment at the hands of its neighbors than they. At different times they have sought refuge in almost all the lands to which they could secure access, like Spain, France, Italy, Germany and England. In every one of these countries they received ungracious treatment ranging from such persecutions as they received in England, and such espionage and hardship as befell them in the ghettos of Russia, Poland and Germany, to the brutal expulsion which drove them in multitudes from Spain in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the later distresses which they suffered at the hands of the Inquisition. Religious prejudice and racial peculiarities have combined to make them unwelcome and unhappy wherever they have gone. They have been the victims of expatriation, exploitation and outrage in all the lands of their dispersion. Naturally they drew together for mutual protection, and reacted with hatred and fear against their oppressors, too often professors of the Christian religion. The stories of the

pale and the ghetto are pathetic and accusing to all who read them and feel in any manner a racial or creedal involvement in them. In such circumstances it would be incredible that they could maintain an unmixed and untainted racial stock. Violence and cruelty have too often had their way. Intermarriage as well has been constant along the margins of Jewish communities, though never approved by the rabbis and the heads of Jewish households.

In spite of all misfortunes, however, this race has multiplied and taken its place among the forceful and successful people of the modern world. The very causes of their misfortunes have likewise been the sources of their strength. Their faith grew stronger with oppression. The degree to which they have attained separateness has been partly of their own choosing, partly due to their religious convictions, partly to their social characteristics, and mostly to the unhappy treatment they have received at the hands of others. In America first of all have they found an asylum and an opportunity. And here as well as in other lands they have produced philanthropists, scholars, artists, journalists and public leaders who have been an honor to their race and a contribution to the progress of the world.

XIII

OTHER SACRED BOOKS

The religious literature of the world is very voluminous and impressive. Most religions that have attained the level of cultural competence have produced writings interpretative of their chief principles. Nearly all the systems of ethical and religious teaching that have arisen in the different ethnic groups have found expression in hymns, ritual, magical formulae, priestly instructions and other types of religious utterance, and these have been gathered into an increasing collection of sacred writings. Most ancient beliefs created something of the sort, though in some instances the material produced was fragmentary and limited and did not attain the status of canonical books.

This was the case in Egypt. As early as the fifth and sixth dynasties two and a half millenniums before Christ the post-mortem fortunes of the pyramid-building kings were deemed of sufficient importance to demand the covering of tomb walls and galleries with hieroglyphic texts which included the ritual of burial, specifications for offerings at the tomb, magical formulae, ritual of worship, hymns, fragments of myths, and prayers for the welfare of the dead monarch. The care taken to provide the dead with the proper credentials for safe passage through the varied experiences of the underworld led to the compilation of several collections of magical texts and directions, among them

"The Book of Him who is in the Underworld," the "Book of Portals," and most important of all, the so-called "Book of the Dead," which was enlarged from time to time until it required a papyrus roll seventy feet in length for its transcription. These and other writings were regarded as classic and essential to the welfare of the soul in the future life. They were not, however, organized into a canon of religious instruction.

The Babylonians had a large body of priestly writings, chiefly employed in the effort to avert evil by the proper rules of magic and liturgical directions for temple usage. The nearest approach they made however to religious books was in the two great epics, the Cosmogonic Story, sometimes called the Epic of Creation, and the Gilgamish Epic. The fortunate survival of fragments of these two poems makes clear the fact that they deal with the creation of the world by Marduk the god of Babylon, the deluge experiences of Utnapishtim, the survivor of the world-flood, and the descent of the goddess Ishtar into Hades. The close relationship of these narratives to the creation and deluge narratives of the book of Genesis is familiar to all students of Semitic literature. In addition there are numerous litanies, lamentations over the anger of the gods, penitential psalms and other materials of like nature. Yet here again there is no suggestion of a canon of religious books for popular use.

The earlier poetry of Greece was much of it deeply religious in spirit. The two great Homeric epics reveal a dignified and reverent attitude toward ethical and religious interests which is impressive. In the Iliad and the Odyssey alike the gods are pictured as upholders of justice and moral-

ity, though not without striking weaknesses of temper and behavior. The same is true of the great dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles. In these writings the lofty sentiments of the classic Greek mind came to their best expression. Nor can one fail to recognize the truly religious note in the teachings of Socrates and Plato. But there was no selected list of writings that assumed to speak with authority regarding the religious life. There was no canon of sacred literature.

With the Aryans of India there is found what may be regarded as the most ancient writing that attained the sanctity of an inspired collection. When these clans entered India from the northwest some millenniums before the Christian era they were already possessed of a body of hymns addressed to Indra the cloud god, Agni the fire god and other nature deities. The Rig-veda the most venerable of their collections is dated by scholars somewhere between 2000 and 1500 B.C. It consists of some 1,030 hymns in more than ten thousand verses, and makes a book equal in size to the Iliad and the Odyssey combined. Closely associated with the Rig-veda in the veneration of the Hindu, though not so widely employed, are the Sama-veda, a collection of sacred chants for temple usage; the Yajur-veda, a book of ritual for sacrifices; and the Atharva-veda, an anthology of magical formulae for the avoidance of evil. The word "veda" means knowledge, and the Vedas have been from time immemorial regarded as the completely inspired literature of Hinduism.

Intimately related to the Vedas in sanctity are the Upanishads, a body of writings speculative and metaphysical in character, professing to be based upon the utterances of

the Atharva-veda. They are 170 in number, and from them, offering as they do such ample opportunities for mystical and philosophic meditation, the long line of Indian poets from the writer of the Bhagavad Gita to Tagore have drawn their inspiration. From this literature were selected the mantras or sacred texts for popular instruction, and upon it were founded the sutras, or rules and aphorisms to be stored in the minds of the devout. In the fullest sense the Vedas and the Upanishads are believed to be inspired. The Brahmins have ever taught that the truths uttered in these holy books were revealed to ancient seers. At the same time it must be understood that the theories of inspiration varied almost as much among the Hindu sages as among the Hebrews, the Jews and the Christians. Some of them affirmed that the Vedas were eternal and constituted a unique and unapproachable body of divine words. Others inclined to the opinion that inspiration never really ceased and that the later classics shared this quality. Between these two extremes there is found the usual orthodox view that the Vedas and the Upanishads possess the quality of divine inspiration in a manner not to be found in other writings. They seem to express the hopes and speculations of the early Brahmins, sunk in those vast and austere conceptions of life which by the vanished stream of the Saraswati first allured the human soul.

The most widely known and popular of the religious books of India is the Bhagavad Gita, the "divine song," which Krishna sang to the warrior Arjuna before the great battle of Kurukshetra. In a very real sense it is the gospel of India, the story of the union of the soul with God. Of it an

informed writer, Professor Howells, says: "It is a living book, devoutly read and studied by tens of thousands of Hindus throughout the length and breadth of India. All men of light and leading in India are thoroughly familiar with its contents, and no man of culture, whether that culture be native or foreign and whether he lives in village, town or city, neglects the study of it." * Allowing for possible exaggeration in this statement, it is at least an impressive comment upon the fundamentally religious character of the Hindus, and is in sufficient contrast with popular acquaintance with the Bible among Christians. Nor must one forget the Ramayana, the epic of Rama and Sita, written by Tulsi Das about 1600 A.D., in which Rama is pictured as the complete incarnation of the divine; or the Homeric character of the Mahabharata, with its stories of the conflicts in which the gods have their part, and in which Krishna is the hero.

Closely related to the Aryan Indians were the ancient Iranians, among whom appeared one of the earliest prophetic reformers of Asia, Zoroaster. His date has been variously placed from 1000 to 650 B.C. A small group of hymns was left by this teacher, and the Gathas, a series of metrical texts, probably also came from the founder of the new faith, who went about as a wanderer and reformer among his people. The sacred scriptures which were gathered about these fragments and were augmented by prophetic utterances, liturgy and ceremonial, hymns, cosmogonic myth and tradition, were gradually assembled in a collection known as the Avesta. The date of this body of writings is assumed to be about 240 A.D. According to the tradition of

* *The Soul of India.*

the Parsees, the modern representatives of the Zoroastrian faith, the Avesta formerly contained twenty-one books. Of these but one now survives. It consists of five parts: a liturgy, the rules of clean and unclean, hymns of various age and merit, and a collection of prayers for daily use. The Gathas are the nucleus of the first of these sections. The divine origin, character and inspiration of Zoroaster were confidently affirmed by his followers. The divine nature of the literature which bears his name is not questioned by the faithful. Few of the Parsees are able to read the classic Zend language in which the Avesta is written. But they repeat, as an act of merit, the sacred Gathas whose meaning they may not know. Most of the essentials of that religion which proclaimed Ahura Mazda as the ever living Lord of light, and which was professed by the great Cyrus and his successors, have passed away. The creed of the modern Parsee is a recognition of the obligation to cultivate "good thoughts, good words and good deeds." The venerable figure of the reformer himself has all but vanished, and the formula: "Thus saith Zarathustra," has but a phantom of meaning.

Perhaps the most conspicuous of the non-Christian faiths, the earliest to transcend the limits of a race and become international in its influence, is Buddhism. Like Christianity and Mohammedanism it has always been a missionary religion, having been carried by zealous representatives from its original home in India to Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, China, Japan, Mongolia, Tibet, and in lesser degree to other parts of Asia. The founder of Buddhism was Siddhartha, or Gautama, a member of the Sakiya clan, born at Kapilavastu, the chief town of that clan, on what is now

the border between British India and Nepal, about 560 B.C. Renouncing family and comfort for the life of a wanderer and devotee, he endeavored for seven years by the usual practices of the mendicant holy men to attain satisfaction of soul, but in vain. At the age of thirty-six, sitting under a tree at Buddh Gaya, he came upon the great secret, the "illumination" in virtue of which he became henceforth the Buddha, the "enlightened." At Sarnath a few miles from Benares are shown the remains of the deer park in which he taught his followers. He spent more than forty years journeying from place to place, instructing the increasing numbers of his disciples, and organizing the order that was to interpret his "way of deliverance" to the world. He died at Kusinara, about 480 B.C., among his friends and devoted adherents, and his ashes were divided among the families who claimed the right to share the honor.

The teachings of the Buddha were treasured by his disciples, transmitted orally, and finally committed to writing in the early portion of the first century B.C. They are contained in a triple collection known as the Tripitika, or "Three Baskets." They are written in the Pali language, a dialect derived from the Sanskrit, and make a body of literature about twice the size of the Bible. The three Pitikas are called respectively the Vinaya Pitika, the Suta Pitika, and the Abhidhamma Pitika. The first is a body of ritual and rules for the early Buddhist monastic communities, and includes the commission given by the Master to his friends to go out and preach his message to mankind. The second is composed of five Nikayas or "collections," constituting a large number of discourses and dialogues, words of the

Buddha and expositions of Buddhist doctrine. These sustain to the rest of the literature much the same relation as do the Gospels to the remainder of the New Testament. The last of these Nikayas consists of fifteen sections, and includes the Dhammapada or Path of the Law, in 423 verses; the Udinas, 82 short lyrics, ecstatic utterances, or "songs of exultation," supposed to have been uttered by the Buddha at important crises of his experience; the Sutta Nipata, 70 lyrics on the secret of peace; the Gathas, psalms of the brethren and sisters of the order; the Jatakas, the most popular of Buddhist literature, a collection of birth stories, folklore and tradition, recounting the previous lives of the Buddha and the merit he acquired by kindness to men and animals. The third is the philosophical elaboration of Buddhism in terms of psychology and ethics. Of these documents the Dhammapada gives the most intelligible statement of the Buddha, the Law and the Order, the three supreme objects of reverence celebrated in the daily confession or "Refuge," which is recited by every pious Buddhist.

These Pali books constitute the classic canon of this religion. In them are found, many times and variously repeated, the essentials of Gautama's teaching: The Four Noble Truths — life is suffering; suffering is the result of desire; cessation of desire ends anxiety and suffering; and this is attained by following the instructions of the Master. These instructions are given in the Noble Eight-fold Path. This includes right belief, aspiration, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and contemplation. Each of these is of course properly defined in the sources. A high level of morality was inculcated, indicated in the Five General Com-

mandments, prohibiting the taking of life, theft, adultery, untruth, and the use of intoxicants. To these were added five more prohibitions for the members of the monastic brotherhood — eating at forbidden times, worldly amusements, scents and ornaments, use of a luxurious bed, and taking silver or gold.

To this Pali Canon, which is now preserved in the palm-leaf manuscripts of Burmah, Ceylon and Siam,* many other books have been added, including a Sanskrit canon, which was chiefly a revision of the classic books in the interests of the Mahayana or liberal movement of the north, and the literature of translation and expansion which has taken form in the various lands to which Buddhism was taken from India its original home. In India it has all but completely disappeared. The Pitikas are revered by all Buddhists, though few of them have access to the original Pali classics. Yet they are not regarded as inspired in the measure claimed for the sacred books of several of the other faiths. They have by no means the same position in Buddhism that the Vedas have in Hinduism, the Koran in Islam, or the Bible in the Christian church. Curiously enough, although a large proportion of the followers of the Buddhist religion regard the Buddha himself as a god and adore his innumerable statues with idolatrous reverence, his words are held authoritative only in the sense in which those of Euclid or Plato are regarded by the learned of all the centuries; they have not the sanctity of the utterances of

* At Mandalay there is a temple in whose court the canonical sayings are inscribed on a multitude of small tablets, each covered with a roof or coping, and set like shrines in rows.

the rishis to the Hindus, Mohammed to the Moslems, Moses to the Jews, or Jesus and the apostles to Christians. In Buddhism the Founder and the Order have proved much more significant than the Law.

Much the same is true of the canonical books of the Chinese. For centuries that run far back into antiquity certain documents have been received as classic and regulative for public and private conduct. It may be said with emphasis that the political and religious life of China has been based upon the five canonical books, which grew out of the life and service of Confucius, and were by him transmitted to the Chinese people. They are not regarded as inspired; they make no claim to have been revealed by any deity. But so great is the veneration of the people of that land for all that is ancient and so conspicuous is the place which Confucius holds in their regard that these volumes lack little of the sanction which in other lands attaches to the most authentic scripture.

Probably none of the great teachers who have held the position of supreme veneration in the thought of their people has ever exercised so profound and widespread an influence as Confucius. When one takes into account the enormous numbers of the Chinese and the unnumbered centuries in which they have flourished in that far-extended region where they still live, and further recalls the fact that through twenty-five of these centuries and by practically all this race one name has held the pre-eminent place, it is not to be doubted that the influence of this great teacher has carried further than that of any other man who has spoken on the basic themes of human life.

Confucius, or K'ung-futze, i.e., "Master K'ung," was born in the small state of Lu in what is now the province of Shantung, in 551 B.C. Most of his life was spent in the work of teaching, though at times he was called upon to serve as an official. He was possessed of an extraordinary reverence for antiquity. As Dante looked back to the Roman empire as the ideal of human government, so Confucius was filled with reverence for the state with its immemorial history, its order and its glory. In the remote past lay the golden age. To restore customs and sanctions that seemed in danger of neglect was his ambition. He counted himself in no sense a founder of a new system of ethics, much less of a new religion. Indeed he expressly disclaimed any concern for religious questions, and advised his students and friends to leave outside the circle of their intellectual interests all matters of speculative and transcendental nature.

The five books which Confucius collected out of the wisdom of the past, and which became the canonical literature of the Chinese people, are the Shu-king or book of historical documents; the Shi-king or book of odes; the Yi-king or book of changes or permutations, a manual of divination; the Hsiao-king or book of filial piety, and the Li-ki or book of rites. In addition there are the four books of classics, which include the Lung-yu, the conversations of Confucius, sometimes called the Confucian Analects; the Ta-hioh or the Great Teaching; the Chang-yung or Doctrine of the Mean; and the Meng-tsze, the instructions of the philosopher Mencius (372–289 B.C.). The latter was the greatest of the successors of Confucius. These books are all more or less associated with the name of China's revered sage and

teacher. The emperor Shi-huang-ti (246–210 B.C.), who thought the veneration for the past inculcated in these classics was a danger to the state, made an effort to destroy them. But the success of this attempt was only partial, and they came to a more exalted place in popular regard in consequence. Since that time they have possessed full canonical character and authority.

Mention has already been made of the sacred book of Judaism, the Talmud. It is of course based upon the teachings of the Old Testament, and embodies the comments and traditions of the scribes from the third Christian century to the sixth. It is in two parts, the Mishna, which is the written form of the scribal elaborations of the Torah, preserved through the earlier centuries in oral form, and the Gamara, containing the later formulation of Jewish theory and tradition as they had taken form in the schools of Palestine and Babylonia.

Outside of the Bible the most impressive example of a body of religious literature regarded by its possessors as authoritative, inspired, canonical, is the Koran, the scripture of the Mohammedan world. It was produced in a period much later than any of the sacred books thus far named, with the exception of the Talmud, which in its completed form was only slightly older. The story of the rise of Islam is romantic. Mohammed was a merchant of Mecca who became possessed of a passion for the emancipation of the Arab race from the superstitions of its idolatrous past. He was acquainted to a limited extent with the rather low types of Jewish and Christian belief and practice in the Arabian cities. From these sources he had gained a certain familiar-

ity with some of the biblical narratives. As the result of controversy with his own clan, the Koriesh, growing out of his claim to religious inspiration and leadership, he was compelled to save himself by flight from Mecca to Medina. This was in 622 A.D., the year which became from that event the beginning of the Mohammedan era. The career of conquest upon which the prophet and his followers embarked rapidly laid the entire Levant at their feet and even threatened Europe.

In the course of his life as a prophet and defender of the faith in one God, Mohammed wrote a considerable number of prayers, directions to his followers, commentations upon incidents in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, and other utterances, which were gathered into a collection, and today constitute the classic literature of Islam. They are in the form of suras or chapters, and collectively are called the Koran, or the "reading." They are most diffusive and various. They deal with all manner of matters, historical, theological, traditional, legendary and ritualistic. They are all at the level of one mind, and were written within a comparatively brief period. Yet they are the basis of all the theology, ethics, jurisprudence, science and ritual of Mohammedanism. The Koran is the textbook in every Mohammedan school. It is believed by conforming members of the community of Islam to be inspired as the work of the prophet's hand and brain, but also to be the utterance of the divine wisdom, of which the prophet was made the oracle and vehicle to mankind. Perhaps the theory of verbal and plenary inspiration was never carried to greater lengths than in the Mohammedan view of the Koran. To the book is

ascribed every possible perfection of form and spirit. The diligence with which it is studied and the zeal with which its teachings are propagated are among the most astonishing features of Islam. Doubtless the glamor of the prophet's own career is thrown over it in the thought of the "true believers," as Mohammedans call themselves. Nor can any fair estimate of the invaluable services of the prophet to his people fail to yield a high meed of praise to the entire movement for the reform of the Arabs. However, one needs this background of romantic achievement to relieve the feeling of disillusionment which results from the reading of the arid and trivial pages which make up no small part of the Koran. The man and the movement remain greater than the literature they produced.

These are examples of the books which for various reasons have become classic and venerable among the chief religious groups of the non-Christian world. Others, like the Granth, the sacred volume of the Sikhs, and the revered and secret Scriptures of the Druses of the Lebanon are of interest to the student of religion. No one of them is without its distinct merits. Each gathers to itself traditions of great souls who have wrought nobly in behalf of their people. In all of them can be discerned something of the breath of the divine which is assurance that God has never left himself without witness among any people. To the men who have poured their hearts into these hymns of the faith and these directions for the holy life one must accord honor and gratitude. Yet the more they are studied and the more their writings are compared with those of our Bible the more are we impressed with the unique character

of the Scriptures which have issued from the hands of Hebrew and Christian prophets and which find their highest levels in the utterances of our Lord. One need not dispraise the other holy writings to perceive the greatness of our own. In fact, the more attention is given to the world literatures of religion, the more impressive becomes the character of the Bible. They are the high and purposeful aspirations of ethnic teachers who saw the truth as they were able and made it known to their people. But in the Bible there is a universal note nowhere else discovered. It is proving itself to be the message of God to the race. The Christianity of which it is the exponent is winning its way slowly but surely in the lands of the non-Christian world. Their bibles are for particular peoples and limited areas. The Bible is for every age and all mankind.

XIV

THE MAKING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The friends of Jesus were not interested in the writing of books. They were not writers, they were preachers. The Master himself was not a writer. He left no document from his own hand. The first disciples were too busy with the new problems and activities of the Christian society to give thought to the making of records.

At the beginning and for some time they were all Jews. The Master himself was a Jew, and all his earliest friends were of that race. Most of them lived in the vicinity of Jerusalem. It was only slowly that the news about the recently formed movement made its way into wider circles. For this reason most of the writers of the first Christian documents were Jews.

Even when the word was taken into Samaria, it was not regarded as a departure from the easily formed habit of thinking of the good tidings regarding Jesus as an essentially Jewish possession. The Samaritans were considered as a part of the ancient people of Jahveh, though on a distinctly lower plane of religious and social privilege. Nor did the acceptance of the gospel by proselytes like the Ethiopian official [1] invade the field of Jewish privilege, because in

[1] Acts 8.

becoming an adherent of Judaism such a man had proclaimed his break with his former non-Jewish life.

None of this early activity which carried the movement into Judea, Samaria and Galilee, required written documents. There seems to have been no literary impulse in the church for years. There was no need for it. The believers were closely associated. The most distant of them could be reached in a few hours with instructions from their leaders. The story of Jesus, which was the substance of their preaching, was known to all. There was no need to write it down. It was the extension of the good news into non-Jewish communities which widened the field of early Christian operations, and gradually called for the use of writing. Particularly was it the ministry of the Apostle Paul which awakened Christians to the importance and value of written communications.

To one who opens the New Testament without previous reflection upon the manner in which it took form, it seems surprising to be told that the Gospels, the books with which it begins, were by no means the earliest of its writings. Would it not seem natural that they should be? Yet a careful reading of the collection makes it apparent that such was not the case. Why should the books have been arranged on a plan which is so at variance with our modern method of setting things in something like chronological sequence? The answer is that the order of the books was probably no important consideration to the men who gathered them into a collection. They were not sensitive to the spirit of historical arrangement, which makes people desire to set documents in the sequence of their dates. Probably they

were far more impressed by the relative value of the Gospels as the chief material of the collection, and so they were placed first.

It would be a valuable aid to the student if he could have a New Testament arranged on this plan of chronological succession. And now that the work of biblical criticism has so far advanced that the dates of practically all the books have been determined, one can use to advantage such works as Moffatt's "Historical New Testament," Lindsay's "Chronological New Testament," Robertson's "Student's Chronological New Testament," or the common speech version known as the "Twentieth Century New Testament."

Apparently the earliest writing in the New Testament is the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. Twenty years had passed since the end of Jesus' ministry. The Christian society had extended its membership from Jerusalem to Antioch, and from Antioch to Asia Minor and Europe. The chief worker in this extension of the movement was Paul. After a considerable period of unrecorded preaching in his own home country, he had been called to Antioch, and from there had gone out with Barnabas and Mark on a mission to Cyprus and the northern mainland. Later a second journey was made in company with Silas and others, in the course of which the apostle crossed to Macedonia, and visited the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Athens, going on presently to Corinth.

From that city he wrote this letter, on the arrival of Timothy with good news regarding the Thessalonians. In it he expresses his joy at their constancy, cautions them to avoid immoral and indolent behavior, and tells them that

they need not fear that their loved ones who have recently died have lost out in the event of the Lord's return, which was eagerly expected. Soon after Paul sent a second letter to the same church, telling its nervous and excitable members not to think of the day of the Lord as immediately at hand, but to maintain calmness and a worthy deportment.

The Epistle to the Galatians was written to the churches in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, which Paul founded on his first missionary tour. It was a powerful protest against the doctrines of Jewish teachers who were attempting to persuade the Christians of those towns to add the familiar forms of Jewish legal observance, such as circumcision, to their program of Christian life. It is the most intense and personal of all the apostle's writings.

Paul had already written one letter to the church at Corinth when our First Epistle to the Corinthians was sent by him from Ephesus. He had learned of factious and questionable conduct in the church, and had received a letter from some of the members asking a number of questions. The Epistle rebukes their divisions, and gives instructions on many matters of importance such as marriage, the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection.

Later on Paul heard that conditions at Corinth were worse than ever. His authority was defied, and evil conduct increased. He sent a third letter, probably to be identified with the last four chapters of 2 Corinthians. The tone of this document is very severe. In deep anxiety as to its effect the apostle waited at Ephesus for a time, and at length journeyed to Troas, and on to Macedonia before he

met Titus and learned that his letter had resulted in improvement in the morale of the church. He thereupon wrote a fourth epistle, perhaps the first nine chapters of 2 Corinthians, expressing his satisfaction at what he had heard, and exhorting them to faithfulness, and particularly to generous contributions to the poor members of the church in Jerusalem, for whose benefit he was gathering offerings from all the congregations he visited.

When Paul had finished his work in the familiar regions of Asia Minor and Greece, he planned to go further into that western world to which he had made his first approach at the time of his vision of "the man of Macedonia."[2] He would go to Rome, the capital of the world, and then on to Spain. He waited only to complete the offering for the Jerusalem church. In the meantime he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, perhaps as a general document of instructions to the churches, telling of his plans, and outlining his great thesis of justification by faith. To this Epistle there seems to have been attached at some later time a brief letter of Paul's to the church at Ephesus,[3] recommending Phoebe of Cenchrea and conveying his best wishes to many of the Ephesian brethren.

The journey of Paul to Jerusalem to carry up the offerings of his western churches resulted in his arrest, imprisonment for two years at Caesarea, and transportation as a prisoner to Rome. From his place of confinement in that city he seems to have sent four letters: To the good friends at Philippi, who had been so thoughtful of his comfort he wrote to express his gratitude. To Philemon, a friend at

[2] Acts 16:9; [3] Rom. 16.

Colosse, whose slave Onesimus had escaped and found refuge with the apostle, he wrote in affectionate terms, sending back the refugee and commending him to the regard of his master as a Christian. To the church in Colosse he sent a message of admonition regarding certain questionable teachings to which they had given credence. And to the neighboring church at Laodicea he also sent an epistle by the hand of the same messenger. It is possible that our Epistle to the Ephesians is this otherwise unknown document.

It seems difficult to realize that with these letters the words of the great apostle closed. No phase of early Christianity is more pathetic than the abrupt frustration of all Paul's plans for further evangelism. So far as it is possible to judge from the evidence presented by the New Testament, the writing and the life of Jesus' first and greatest interpreter ceased with his Roman imprisonment. Probably, by this time, martyrdom had ended the life of the Apostle Peter as well.

No one of the Gospels had as yet come into being. But there was a man who, as a youth, had known the members of the Jerusalem church, where his mother lived, had been the companion of Paul on a part of his first missionary tour, and had acted as Peter's helper in later years, perhaps at Rome. This was John Mark, the son of Mary of Jerusalem. Sometime after Peter's death, and before the fall of Jerusalem, he seems to have written down the story of Jesus' life as his master, Peter, was accustomed to tell it. The Gospel of Mark is a brief, vivid narrative, emphasizing the power of the Lord in miracle and ministry. It was well

adapted to convey to its readers a suitable impression of the character of the Master.

The fall of Jerusalem was an event of tremendous significance to the Jewish people. It appeared to put the seal of condemnation upon their conduct. A part of that conduct had been the rejection of Jesus. At first and partly in consequence of that rejection, he had seemed to fail. Now the nation itself had fallen, and Jesus' followers were multiplying everywhere. A writer of the period, convinced that Jesus had really brought to its consummation the experience of the nation, gathered the materials for another memoir. It is based on several sources: The work of Mark, a collection of the teachings of Jesus attributed to the Apostle Matthew, and other materials. The book thus produced came to be known as the Gospel of Matthew. In it the person and message of our Lord as the fulfillment of Hebrew hopes for the kingdom of God are set forth. It is in an important sense the Gospel of the Jewish people.

So far as we know the entire group of New Testament writers was Jewish, with one exception. That was Luke, the friend of Paul. He was a Greek and a physician. His acquaintance with the apostle brought him into contact with the leaders and scenes of early Christian history. The story of the greatest life ever lived was being told in many ways. Oral narratives and fragments of written memorabilia were floating about. For the benefit of a friend, Theophilus, Luke wrote with painstaking care a record of Jesus' acts and sayings. He brought to his work the broad sympathies of a cosmopolitan. His narrative is the Gospel of humanity, of brotherhood, of womanhood, childhood and Christian song.

It was the Gospel for the Greek world of culture and humanitarian interest.*

From the same writer there came also the book of Acts, a brief account of some of the events which marked the growth of the Christian community from the close of Jesus' ministry to the end of Paul's career. As the friend of the great apostle, Luke had personal knowledge of much of the narrative; from Paul he doubtless learned other portions; and the remainder could easily be secured during his residence in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Antioch. This book supplies most of the information we have concerning the early days of the church in Jerusalem and the ministry of Peter, and puts an interpreting background behind the epistles of Paul.

The first generation of Christians, including Paul, counted much upon the protection of the Roman empire against its persecutors. It was therefore a bitter disappointment when that empire itself turned persecutor, in the days of Nero and later under Domitian. The martyrdoms of those periods thrust the iron deep into the souls of the disciples. They were called upon to adore the image of the emperor, or suffer the horrors of the stake and the arena. This is the situation which is made evident in the book of Revelation. Its author was a Christian teacher named John, probably of Ephesus. He had suffered banishment, and perhaps torture for the sake of the faith. To encourage his fellow-believers he wrote a series of letters to seven of the

* The fact that the first three Gospels present much the same aspect of the life of Jesus has suggested the name "Synoptic" as an appropriate designation for them.

churches of that vicinity, and in the figurative language of Jewish apocalypse he added a vehement denunciation of the Roman empire and its head. The Christ who had gone about in mild friendliness and sympathy was soon to return as the Lord of the world, to take vengeance on his foes and establish his kingdom in the earth. This Christian apocalypse must have been of great value in maintaining the courage of the church in those difficult times.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was probably written to the church at Rome by someone unknown to us, but familiar with the dangers that menaced that group. The Christians there had endured bitter persecution. Now there was danger that the lengthening time, the delay in the realization of the Lord's return, the appeal of the more spectacular Jewish services of religion, and the death of their leaders, would lead to apathy and even apostasy. The epistle is a plea for loyalty to the gospel as in every way superior to the Jewish institution, and the means of direct access to God through the redemptive ministry of Jesus, the great High Priest.

Another document closely connected with Rome is the First Epistle of Peter, written by a Christian leader in the capital to the disciples of Jesus in Asia Minor, encouraging them in the difficulties they were facing. It was probably sent out during the days of the Domitian persecution, and the writer's reference to Rome as "Babylon" reveals the sentiment of detestation for Roman tyranny which had permeated the church.

In the Epistle of James, there is given an example of the sort of Christian exhortations of which there must have

been great numbers in the first two centuries. It is a work of practical counsel. It has been thought that the author was a brother of Jesus, but this tradition is based upon nothing in the writing itself.

In many respects the most impressive book in the New Testament is the Gospel of John. It is less an attempt to narrate the events in the life of Jesus than to interpret that life as a whole, and mediate the message of the gospel to a world which had little use for Jewish forms of speech such as filled much of the earlier Christian writings. This Gospel probably took form early in the second century, and it may owe its origin to that John the Elder, of Ephesus, of whom tradition had much to say. The difficulties that confront the view that it was written by a personal follower of Jesus are apparent, though the expressions in the epilogue indicate that it was early regarded as the work of the disciple whom Jesus loved. It is the Gospel of the incarnation. Professor Goodspeed, in his *Story of the New Testament,* says: "Its great ideas of revelation, life, love, truth and freedom, its doctrine of the spirit as ever guiding the Christian consciousness into larger vision and achievement, and its insistence upon Jesus as the supreme revelation of God and the source of spiritual life, have given it unique and permanent religious worth."

The three Epistles of John probably came from the same hand. The First Epistle was in all likelihood a circular letter sent to the churches of the Asian district, emphasizing the great ideas of the earlier and longer work, particularly the reality of Jesus' human life, and the necessity of conforming to his commands. The two shorter epistles may have

been personal messages to friends and comrades in the faith, to whom the more general writing was sent.

The Epistles to Timothy and Titus appear to be late directions regarding church organization and efficiency. It is not unlikely that they are based upon short and genuine epistles of Paul, some portion of whose words have survived in these admirable churchly counsels. But the Pauline note is almost wholly wanting.

A still later fragment of early Christian writing is found in the Epistle of Jude. It was a stinging rebuke to scandalous thinking and conduct in the churches, and draws much of its symbolism from the lurid pages of Jewish apocalyptic, like the book of Enoch. Some time afterward another writer made use of much of this document in probably the last book of the New Testament, the Second Epistle of Peter, another example of that large body of early Christian literature which grew up around the name of that apostle.

Already there was a rapidly growing body of writings bearing the names of apostolic men, and it was the task of later years to gather into a collection those books which were thought worthy of that honor and to exclude all others. But in that recognized group or canon these twenty-seven books gradually secured their place and became the Christian Scriptures as we now have them. The process of forming a collection of Christian writings which should serve for the churches the same purpose as the Hebrew canon for the synagogue was so gradual, and in a manner so unconscious, that no definite account of it is possible.

The Hebrew Scriptures which we now call the Old

Testament formed the acknowledged sacred writings of the first Christian communities. It is probable that these Scriptures even included the apocryphal books. Because of the fact that most of the first generation of the followers of Jesus were Jews, the classic books of the Hebrew race, generally used in the Greek version called the Septuagint, or LXX, were to them inspired and authoritative. They searched them for hints of the messianic hope. The book of Psalms was their hymn book. They needed no other holy books in the beginning of the movement.

But when their own literature began to take form and multiply, it was inevitable that they should face the problem as to the kind of writings suitable for reading in the public worship. This was an entirely simple and practical question, and did not at first involve the broader inquiry as to the canonical value of such books. None the less, those writings which gained recognition in the churches as profitable for use in the worship held the priority as candidates for any subsequent inclusion in a reserved and canonized group.

Aside from the Old Testament, which was employed in the Septuagint translation, those churches which received letters from men of apostolic standing would be sure to make use of them in worship. Epistles like those of Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians and Philippians would be held in high esteem by those congregations and preserved for frequent use in the public service. In like manner such epistles as the ones to the churches in Colosse and Laodicea, which Paul instructed their recipients to exchange, would certainly be preserved in copies by both groups, and

employed as of lectional value. Hardly less important were the circular letters, like Romans, 1 Peter and perhaps Ephesians. These also would find a place in the list of writings held sacred by the churches. But by the Christian communities at large the Epistles did not come into general esteem until after the Gospels were recognized as in some sense authoritative.

The first reference to a body of books used for reading in the public worship is found in the writings of Justin Martyr (died 165 A.D.), who speaks of the three Gospels (the Synoptic group) along with the Prophets of the Old Testament as having this rank. Soon afterward Tatian, a disciple of Justin's, prepared a composite narrative of the life of Jesus for the use of the church at Edessa. This was woven together out of the four Gospels, and was called the Diatessaron, or narrative "according to the Four."

The list of books named by Marcion (about 140 A.D.) does not throw light on church usage, for he had a special purpose in directing attention to the teaching of Paul, which he thought was falling into neglect. His canon consisted of a modified Gospel of Luke, and ten epistles of Paul, the pastoral epistles being excluded. Here for the first time epistles took rank with the Gospel records.

The thirty years from Justin Martyr to Irenaeus of Lyons (177–202 A.D.) witnessed a rapid but unrecorded growth of opinion regarding the right of most of our present New Testament books to a recognized place in a canon of Scripture. In the writings of the latter the Epistles take rank with the Gospels (though Hebrews is not mentioned), and the entire list is lifted from casual use by the churches

to the plane of authoritative Scripture. It is not known who was responsible for this development. Perhaps Irenaeus himself. At any rate, the dangers to apostolic teaching from the inroad of heretical, particularly gnostic, opinion, rendered it necessary to possess some standard of appeal in a body of books vested with apostolic character.

Passing over Marcion's partial and biased list, the earliest known canon of New Testament writings is found in the Muratorian Fragment. In 1740 an Italian scholar named Muratori found in the Ambrosian library at Milan, in a monk's notebook dating from the seventh or eighth century, a mutilated extract of a list of New Testament books made at Rome before the close of the second century. The fragment starts in the middle of a sentence, referring to Peter's connection with the second Gospel, and proceeds to name Luke as the third Gospel and John as the fourth. Presumably it dealt with all four of the evangelists as we have them. It speaks of Acts as the work of Luke. It mentions thirteen epistles of Paul, thus including the pastoral epistles, but excluding Hebrews. It recognizes Jude, two epistles of John, and the book of Revelation. It includes also the Wisdom of Solomon and the Apocalypse of Peter, though with reserve in the case of the latter. This document thus includes most of our New Testament books; but it is noticeable that Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, James and one of the epistles of John are not named. The Shepherd of Hermas is referred to as profitable reading.

At the opening of the third century there is an anonymous writing which has been attributed by some to Victor of Rome (200–230 A.D.). Reference is made in it to the

three divisions of Scripture: Prophetic writings — the prophets of the Old Testament, the Apocalypse, and Hermas; the Gospels; and the Apostolic writings — Paul, 1 John and Hebrews. It will be noticed that this list omits Acts, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude. Neither this nor the list in the Muratorian Fragment can be regarded as a certain guide to church usage in that period, for their authors are unknown. But they are valuable as throwing light upon the growing process of selecting a list of authoritative books to which appeal could be made in the refutation of heresy.

In the eastern church, Clement of Alexandria (165–220 A.D.) acknowledges the four Gospels and Acts, and fourteen epistles of Paul, thus including Hebrews. He also quotes from 1 and 2 John, 1 Peter, Jude and Revelation. He does not refer to James, 2 Peter or 3 John. But it is difficult to determine his views regarding the authentic list of sacred writings, for he also quotes in much the same manner from Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, the Preaching of Peter, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Sibylline Writings. According to Eusebius he had a collection of New Testament books in two volumes which he called "The Gospel" and "The Epistle" respectively.

Somewhat more conclusive is the testimony of Origen (184–253 A.D.), the greatest of the Greek church fathers. He mentions as authoritative the books of the Old Testament as we have them, and portions of the Apocrypha, particularly 1 Maccabees. He includes in the canon of the New Testament the four Gospels, Acts, thirteen epistles of Paul, Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 John and Revelation. He does not

directly mention James or Jude. He speaks of 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John as in dispute, and in more doubtful words refers to the Gospel of the Hebrews, the Gospels of Peter and James, the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, and Barnabas. But all his commentaries are upon books in our New Testament canon.

An important contribution to the settlement of the question of canonicity was made by Eusebius of Caesarea (270–341 A.D.), the eminent church historian. He made three lists of books: First, those that were admitted by all, including the four Gospels, Acts, the Epistles of Paul, reckoned to be fourteen in number, 1 Peter, 1 John and (with some hesitation) Revelation. Second, those books that were widely accepted, though held doubtful by some; these included James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John. Third, those regarded by him as spurious, including the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. At the order of the emperor Constantine, Eusebius had fifty copies of the Scriptures prepared in elaborate form for the use of the churches of Constantinople. These copies naturally conformed to his rule of canonicity and assisted in fixing it.

From this time onward the eastern church continued to hold much the same view. Athanasius (246–273 A.D.) gives a list of New Testament books which agrees with our own. So also does Epiphanius (315–403 A.D.). Cyril of Jerusalem (350–386 A.D.) differs from them only in omitting Revelation. A little later (395 A.D.) appeared a versified list of the books of the New Testament by Amphilochius of Iconium, in which are found all the books as we have them except

Revelation. Chrysostom the famous patriarch of Constantinople (died 405 A.D.) gives no formal list of the books, but in his voluminous writings makes no mention of Revelation, or 2 Peter, or either of the three epistles of John. In an appendix to the eighth book of the Apostolical Constitutions there is a document which may go back to the fourth century A.D., which places Ben Sirach after the Old Testament and follows it with the four Gospels, fourteen epistles of Paul (including Hebrews), the two epistles of Clement, the eight books of the Apostolical Constitutions, and Acts. This, like some of the others, omits Revelation.

In the western church at this period Augustine (354–430 A.D.) discussed the canon in a lengthy treatise, dividing the books into two lists, those which all received, and those regarding which there was some question. In the case of the latter group he thought the usage of the churches, particularly the more important ones, should decide. His final verdict agrees with our own New Testament. Jerome (346–420 A.D.), whose Latin version, the Vulgate, did more to fix the canon than any other single influence, accepted the same list as his great contemporary, noting that there had been questions regarding James, Jude, Hebrews and Revelation. He remarks that 2 and 3 John have been attributed to a certain presbyter John of Ephesus.

None of the early church councils seem to have given pronouncement on the subject of the canon, if a possible decision of the Council of Laodicea (about 360 A.D.) be excepted. This approves the Old Testament, Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah, and all the New Testament with the exception of Revelation. But this testimony is question-

able. In the west, the Third Council of Carthage (397 A.D.) ordered that nothing be read as Scripture in the churches except the Canonical Scriptures, which are named as the Old Testament, the entire Apocrypha, and the New Testament in its present form. These consiliar decisions probably had but small effect upon the growing verdict of the church. It was rather the immense influence of Augustine, and the widespread use of Jerome's Vulgate which put an end to the discussion for centuries.

During all this time if there had been question as to why these particular books were included in the received canon the reply would doubtless have been that tradition and usage accepted them as the work of the Apostles, or at least of apostolic men. But the Revival of Learning and the Reformation which followed it turned attention to the subject afresh. The reformers appealed to an authoritative Scripture as over against the authoritative Church of Rome. Of course this appeal necessitated careful inquiry into the nature and validity of the Bible. Were these books which had been accepted for centuries as apostolic actually the writings of the first interpreters of Jesus?

Erasmus doubted that the Epistle to the Hebrews was either by Paul or Luke; he did not think 2 Peter could have been the work of that apostle; and he disbelieved that Revelation was from the hand of the evangelist John. He did not question the worth of these books, nor their right to a place in the canon; he only denied their apostolic origin. But this was also to invalidate the familiar criterion of apostolic genesis. Luther was equally bold in his challenge of the traditional views of biblical authorship. In this he

held ground similar to that taken by some of the Roman Catholic scholars of his day. Cardinal Cajetan, in the Augsburg disputation with Luther, questioned whether Hebrews was either Pauline or canonical, and doubted whether 2 and 3 John and Jude should be included.

The reformers insisted that the contents not the authorship of New Testament books must determine their canonicity. Luther's criterion was the conformity of a book to his great principle of justification by faith. He held therefore that the epistles of Paul — especially Romans, Galatians and Ephesians — 1 Peter and the fourth Gospel were the most important books of the collection. He placed Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation at the end of his translation as having a somewhat different tone. He was very free in his discussion of the relative merits of the various books. But he included them all in his translation. Calvin had a different rule, and regarded the testimony of the holy Spirit within the books as the test of their canonicity. He passed over 2 and 3 John and the Revelation without notice, and expressed doubts regarding 2 Peter, James and Jude. Luther's friend Carlstadt arranged the Bible in three divisions: the Pentateuch and the four Gospels; the prophets of the Old Testament and the Epistles of the New, including thirteen of Paul, 1 Peter and 1 John; and the Writings, or Hagiographa, of the Old Testament and the seven disputed books of the New. Thus in spite of wide variety of opinion regarding the origin of the New Testament books, the reformers did not alter the canon.

The first official and general pronouncement made upon the question was the declaration of the Council of Trent

(1546 A.D.), which uttered anathema upon anyone refusing to accept as canonical all the books contained in the Vulgate version of the Scriptures. This fixed the Apocrypha along with the Old Testament as an accepted part of the Roman Catholic Bible. In the New Testament, Romanists and Protestants hold the validity of the same books. The many versions of the Bible issued in various languages by the Protestant churches have made familiar their collection and arrangement of the various portions of holy Scripture.

In recent years the problems relating to the canon have given way in large measure to the more important inquiries suggested by biblical criticism. This discipline has gone afresh into the matters of authorship and date with valuable results for biblical study. But the canon remains unaffected, for the reason that it rests today mainly upon tradition and usage. If the apostolic authorship once affirmed of practically all the books cannot longer be claimed, at least a certain apostolic atmosphere and feeling is discoverable in all. To this must be added their place in the church through the years, which invests them with a veneration not to be questioned; and above all, their inherent value as aids to the interpretation of the early Christian ideal and character.

It must be borne in mind however that valuable as the opinion of the early church may have been in regard to the canonicity of certain books, and important as the confirmation of that verdict by the church through the centuries may be for belief and comfort today, yet it is the conviction of the individual mind at last which must determine what for itself shall be the limits of holy Scripture. In reality our Bible, the Bible we know and reverence, consists of just

those books we actually use, the ones which have proved their power to find and inspire us. It is useless for anyone to insist that his Bible has in it a list of books which the church, or the beliefs of his fathers, or any other validation, has approved. In the final issue the canon of any Christian is the group of books he uses as the Word of God. We are the makers of our own individual canons, just as the Christian world has always chosen deliberately and perhaps half unconsciously its Scripture.

And if that historic process of canon fixing were to begin all over again, and were to be submitted afresh to all classes of people, and if there were to be added to the material available for choice all the books written in all the lands since the Bible took form, the result would be the same. These sixty-six books would emerge once more from the process, a new yet venerable aggregation of writings upon the high themes of God and religion. They have proved their worth through the ages. And to the end of time they are destined to go on proving themselves to be the divine word to men, the supreme literature of the race.

Having spoken of the authentic biblical books in this and other chapters, something may well be added regarding that larger circle of writings which forms the environment of the Scriptures, and may well be called the Larger Bible. As already pointed out once and again, the Bible is not a solitary work, although this has been the usual tradition concerning it. It is a matter of history that until recent times the Bible stood almost if not quite alone in the occidental mind as the world's holy book. No other books or documents intruded into the cloistered and safeguarded inclosure

in which it reigned. If it was not held actually to be the oldest of books, certain of its contents like Genesis and Job were given this place of priority among the world's writings. If there were documents that had association with the authentic books of the Scriptures, and were even included as apocryphal works in certain editions, they were usually treated as literary curiosities, mere odds and ends of religious experience, related in some indefinite and unimportant manner to the genuine collection.

At the present time this vague and defensive attitude toward the wider ranges of this literature is disappearing, and the Bible is seen as having immediate and helpful relations with varieties of literature which relate themselves to it in many ways. This volume of writings includes by no means all of the literature which this religious movement, taken in its long stretches from ancient Hebrew times through the classic era and to post-apostolic days, has produced. The fact that the Bible is accepted throughout Christendom as the unique and adequate interpreter of the Christian faith does not justify the neglect of that mass of documents which took form in the same environment, and which have been carried along in a rather loose and yet somewhat related series of collections. Each of these smaller bodies of documents holds some relation to our Bible. They may be said to revolve about it, as planets of varying size and importance revolve around the sun.

If one undertakes to put these different collections of writings into some orderly arrangement he may well begin with those which have come into our possession through the discovery and translation of the historical inscriptions

and other documents of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and the other lands that formed the environment of the Hebrew people. Formerly biblical events and characters stood out by themselves, with no confirmation from contemporary history. Biblical statements regarding contacts with these neighboring states stood upon their own authority, without aid of the historical background which comparative history and biblical archaeology have now provided. The inscriptions of kings like Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib, Nebuchadrezzar, Cyrus, and several of the pharaohs read like additional chapters to the books of Kings. Equally valuable for the study of the New Testament are the literary materials and the archaeological discoveries that have given fresh interest to the history of the Graeco-Roman period.

A second list of writings is one that is not now in the possession of biblical scholarship, but must be kept in the imagination of the student if a just estimate is to be made of the literary impulse that produced the Old Testament. This is the group of actually "lost books," to which reference is made from time to time in the Hebrew Scriptures, not as a collection, but as individual writings which were known to the authors who referred to them.* The Book of Jasher, the Book of the Wars of Jahveh, the History of Samuel the Seer, the History of Nathan the Prophet, the Book of the Acts of Solomon, the Histories of Shemiah the Prophet and of Iddo the Seer, the Commentary of the Book of the Kings, and several other works are mentioned, as well as those Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah which are so tantalizingly and so frequently mentioned in the narratives

* See pp. 17, 24, 35.

that have survived. These references afford suggestion of the ampler body of writings once possessed by the Hebrew people. But all have perished save the thirty-nine books in our collection. Indeed the survival of any writing that was in Hebrew seems to have been the chief criterion for its inclusion in the canon. Will some of these lost documents be found as the result of the fresh interest in excavation in biblical lands? It is not probable. Yet the door is never closed.

A third group of documents related to the Bible is the so-called Apocrypha of the Old Testament. This is the collection of books written in late Hebrew, in Aramaic, and in hellenistic Greek. This language that superseded Hebrew as a vehicle of literary activity, and was employed in the preparation of a number of late utterances related to Hebrew and Jewish interests, was made the medium for the translation of the Old Testament into the literature of the later Graeco-Egyptian age, and furnished the speech of the New Testament. The body of apocryphal works, including Maccabees, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach, and others, fourteen in all, was often included in the older and larger Bibles, between the two Testaments. By the Roman Catholic church they have been given a higher value than by Protestants. They throw valuable light upon conditions in the Jewish community in the late pre-Christian period, and are receiving more of the attention they deserve.

Fourth in this enumeration of books intimately related to the Bible is the collection of Jewish and Christian apocalypses, the study of which has taken so important a place

in the recent activities of biblical scholars.* The Bible contains two books of the apocalyptic type, Daniel and Revelation. But there was a considerable literature of similar character which took form between 200 B.C. and 150 A.D. It was a literature of confident appeal from an era of persecution to one of divine vindication. It was a literature of cryptic utterance, symbolism, significant numbers and colors, in which the saints of the Jewish or the Christian assemblies were assured of an early deliverance from their persecutions and the overthrow of their foes. This list of books includes, besides the two mentioned, the various apocalypses of Enoch and Ezra, Baruch, the Assumption of Moses, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Psalms of Solomon, the Book of Jubilees, the Sibylline Oracles, and fragments of other works. The influence of these documents upon the thought and speech both of Jews and Christians in the first century was notable, and may be observed in many of the expressions of the New Testament. There is no single collection of these books, as it would run to considerable size. But in separate volumes, with valuable commentation, they are accessible in the editions of Professor Charles and other modern scholars.

A final list of works may be called roughly the apocrypha of the New Testament. The selection of the twenty-seven books of the present Christian Scriptures was not a rapid process. As already explained, many works came from the hands of early Christian writers, and many different collections were formed, some containing more and some less than our present New Testament. Those that did not find acceptance in the collections made by the greater leaders of

* See pp. 114 ff.; 227 f.

the church, like Clement and Origen, were still regarded as of interest, and some of them, like Barnabas, Hermas, the Clementine letters, and the Teachings of the Twelve, came to have a place hardly inferior to the canonical books. Other writings there were of early date but less significance, like the various spurious Gospels — of Mary, of the Infancy, of Nicodemus, of Thomas, of Peter — the Acts of Paul and Thecla, the Acts of Pilate, several pseudo-apostolic epistles such as the Magnesians, the Trallians, the Smyrnaeans, etc. To these later collectors have added various legendary fragments, such as the fictitious correspondence of Paul and Seneca, the fanciful stories of Christ and Abgarus, and the equally mythical letters of Herod and Pilate. Such books grade down from early and reverent Christian writings, through pseudo-authoritative instructions and recitals, to purely imaginary sketches, the effort to satisfy natural Christian curiosity regarding the early period of the church.

These various lists of works, most of them available for the use of the student of biblical literature, throw valuable light upon the nature and purpose of the authentic Scriptures, and indeed constitute a sort of larger Bible, whose intelligent examination cannot fail to prove of profit to those who wish to master the meaning and interpret the spirit of the holy Scriptures.

XV

BIBLICAL CRITICISM

The Hebrew of the Old Testament books was a speech closely related to the other Semitic languages, like the Babylonian, Phoenician and Arabic. It was written in an alphabet much more archaic than the square so-called Hebrew letters of our common Hebrew texts, which are in reality Aramaic, the sort which superseded the classic form some centuries before Christ. Examples of the older writing, such as that in which most of the Old Testament was written, are to be found in the Moabite inscription of King Mesha of the period of 800 B.C., in the Siloam inscription of the reign of Hezekiah, and in Phoenician inscriptions.

No portion of the Old Testament has survived in original documents. The earliest specimens of biblical Hebrew are found in certain fragments whose date is not earlier than the tenth century A.D. From later times great numbers of such manuscripts of the Old Testament text are extant. They owe their preservation to the care with which they were handled in the synagogues of the Jewish people. But examination of their character shows that they all go back to a single edition of the text, prepared by Jewish scholars in the third Christian century, at which time the variant readings were eliminated and imperfect manuscripts suppressed, after the manner followed by the editors of the Koran in later days.

The labor of unifying and preserving the Hebrew text was begun about 250 A.D. by Rabbi Aqiba and his disciples, and continued for many centuries in the various rabbinical schools. Elaborate rules were devised for the careful transmission of the text, and the exactitude with which this was accomplished is shown by the fact that the errors of that established codex have been perpetuated with the same zeal as its proper readings. This was done in the belief that the inexplicable forms, like abnormally small or large letters found in the text, were in some mystical manner significant of the divine will and not to be disturbed.

These scholars of the Jewish schools have received the names of Massoretes from the fact that the product of their labors was called the Massorah or tradition, the thing that was handed on. One of the devices used to perpetuate the interpretation as well as the form of the text upon which they came to agree was the invention of the vowel points for the Hebrew text. As written at first, and in fact more commonly through all the history of the language, Hebrew had only consonants. The vowels were supplied by the reader. But as in our own language, this would naturally lead to great ambiguity.

To obviate such danger of confusion, the Massoretic scribes devised a system of points and other marks to be used above, below and within the various consonant letters. This was no doubt of great advantage. But at best it only served to make permanent the interpretation which had met the approval of the Massoretes.

As a matter of fact very serious changes had been wrought in the Hebrew text between the days in which the

various portions of the Old Testament took form and the time of the unification of its text in the second and third Christian centuries. This is proved by the variations from that text shown in the LXX, in the Targums and in the New Testament. But perhaps the most convincing proof of errors in transcription is found in the differences between two sets of parallel narratives in the Old Testament itself, as in the comparison of Kings with Chronicles, of 2 Samuel 22 with Psalm 18, and many other instances. It is well-nigh impossible to copy a manuscript correctly. Errors of all sorts are likely to creep in. Such errors are due to failure to understand the passage copied, or to a mistake of the eye in reading one word or letter for another, or to a misunderstanding of words when several copyists follow the voice of a reader, or failure of memory to carry properly several words in a series. These and other types of scribal mistake are abundantly illustrated by the ordinary Old Testament text.

It is therefore the task of one who undertakes the study of the text of the Old Testament to recognize the fact that the original writers used a form of Hebrew letters different from those now in use, that they did not employ vowel points, that their words were in many instances not separated one from another, and that the divisions of their material were not marked off in any way. From all this it follows that the sort of study which yields the most satisfactory results is that which secures from the materials now at hand the meanings most in harmony with the current of biblical teaching throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. This would seem simple and obvious. But it does not take account of

Jewish and even early Christian tradition which at times obtrudes itself in the path of the plain meanings of the writings.

With the weight of this ancient tradition clearly felt, it is not strange that most of the translations should have been content to go back to the Massoretic text. This has been true from the days of Jerome and the Vulgate. Through all the centuries since that time the immense volume of material slowly collected from the many versions has been given small attention until our own day. Even yet the spell of the Jewish tradition is strong. In most cases in which students attempt to study the Hebrew text of the Old Testament they content themselves with such editions of the Massoretic reading as those of Baer and Delitzsch, or Ginsburg. As might be expected the Revised Version which took form before the searching critical work of the last twenty-five years came to light relies almost as much as the King James version upon the Massoretic text. The special labors of an army of independent scholars in the field of Old Testament textual criticism is now available.

The work of finding the most nearly perfect text of the Bible or of any other book is called textual criticism. A more common name for it is the Lower Criticism. This term is not employed to signify a lower grade of importance attaching to this process than to some other but to indicate the primary, fundamental character of these inquiries as contrasted with those of the historical and literary investigations which follow. These latter have to do with authorship, integrity, historicity and chronology. They are comprehended under the term Higher Criticism.

Criticism means separation. It is the attempt to discriminate between the genuine and the spurious, the original and the superficial. All students of the Bible recognize the invaluable nature of the labors of textual critics. Upon the foundations they have laid and are laying, the structure of historical studies, Hebrew and Christian origins, and the theological disciplines takes form. There was a time when all types of biblical criticism were viewed with disquietude by the uninformed. Now the vital necessity of such researches as have been made both by the lower and the higher critics, and the value of their results both to scholarship and to faith are the commonplaces of intelligent Bible study.

If the work of the textual critic has been of great value in the field of Old Testament study, even more romantic and not less significant has it been in the case of the Christian documents. And as these are the literary materials upon which rests the religious assurance of the most progressive nations in the world, their importance as sources and the necessity of their complete investigation are at once apparent.

As in the case of the older Scriptures, there are no autograph copies of the New Testament extant. The most ancient copies we possess go back no further than the fourth century. It is probable that the books were mostly written and copied upon papyrus, a perishable material at best. It was not until Christianity became a recognized and powerful influence in the Roman empire in the fourth century that the multiplication and preservation of its books became a matter of widespread concern, and papyrus was super-

seded by vellum or parchment as the material on which its documents were reproduced.

Of these manuscripts there were two sorts, an earlier and a later. From the fourth to the tenth century they were written in Greek capital letters, and were for that reason called uncials. From the tenth century a smaller and more running script was used. This is called minuscule or cursive. Of the uncials about one hundred and sixty are known, containing the entire New Testament, or parts of it. Of the cursives there are upwards of three thousand.

There are five of the great uncials that are the most famous. The discovery by Tischendorf of a manuscript of the Greek Bible in the library of the monastery of St. Catherine at the traditional Mt. Sinai in 1844 was one of the most notable events in the history of the biblical text. This was secured by him in 1859 and is now in the Imperial Library at Leningrad. It is known as Codex Sinaiticus, or Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It dates from the fourth century. There is in the British Museum a manuscript of most of the Greek Bible given to Charles I in 1627 by the Patriarch of Constantinople. It is known as Codex Alexandrinus, or A. In the Vatican Library at Rome there is probably the oldest and most valuable manuscript of the Greek New Testament. It is of the fourth century, and is called Codex Vaticanus, or B. In the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris there is a manuscript of the Greek Bible dating from the fifth century. In the twelfth century a Syrian Christian named Ephraem washed or scraped the vellum in order to write some of his own compositions upon it. It is, therefore, a palimpsest, nearly illegible in portions.

It is called Codex Ephraemi, or C. In the University Library at Cambridge there is a Greek and Latin codex of the Gospels and Acts, which was presented by Theodore Beza, who obtained it from the monastery of St. Irenaeus at Lyons. It is believed to come from the sixth century, or perhaps even the fifth. It is named Codex Bezae, or D.

It is the task of the textual critic of the New Testament, in the effort to approach as near as possible to the authentic text of the Christian sources, to compare these and the scores and even hundreds of other manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, or of parts of it; to secure in addition all the information furnished by the many ancient versions; and to compare with these the many quotations found in the early Christian fathers which show what readings they found in the texts they used.

The Greek text of the New Testament which was best known to scholars until recent times is called the Textus Receptus, or Received Text. It is practically the same as that published by Stephens in 1550 and by the Elzevirs in 1624. These in turn were based upon the two earliest printed texts of the New Testament, that of Erasmus, published in 1516, and that of the Complutension Polyglot, printed in 1514 and issued in 1522. They were representative of the kind of Greek manuscripts accessible in the middle ages. Upon the Received Text the Authorized or King James Version of the New Testament was based. A very large proportion of the material with which the textual critic of the New Testament is concerned has become available during the past two centuries. Much of this evidence goes far back of anything Erasmus or his contemporaries had at hand.

For example, the Vatican Codex, the oldest and best of the texts, has become fully known only within the last half century, and Tischendorf's great discovery was not published until 1862.

The list of men who have worked at the task of compiling the facts and applying them to the reconstruction of the text of the New Testament books is long. Among the notable names are Bengal (1734), Wetstein (1752), Semler (1767), Griesbach (1774), Lachman (1831), Tischendorf (1869), and Tregelles (1870). But the most eminent contributors to a satisfactory text have been the two English scholars, Bishop Westcott and F. J. S. Hort. Their joint labors upon the Greek text began as far back as 1853, but their finished product, accompanied by an explanatory introduction, came from the press in 1881, five days before the publication of the English Revised Version.

In the long years during which the science of textual criticism has developed, many recognized rules for the prosecution of the task have taken form. These are now familiar to all scholars. Among them are the necessity of gathering all the facts, historical, geographical and linguistic, regarding a manuscript before its evidence is estimated; the danger of relying upon numbers, since twenty manuscripts might be copied from an inferior text and be of less value than two whose ancestry is older and more satisfactory; a shorter reading is preferable to a longer one, because a text is more likely to be changed by additions than by omissions; a more difficult and obscure reading is to be preferred to one simpler and easier, because a copyist has a tendency to explain a seemingly difficult passage; and a reading which indicates a

controversial bias is less likely to be genuine than one to which no such suspicion adheres.

The application of these and numerous other criteria has given us our comparatively modern and authenticated text of the New Testament, although the Westcott and Hort material was not available for the English Revision. But even so in many places the Revised Versions show the value of careful critical work, as compared with the Authorized Version. One who is interested in the new readings which have resulted from the work of textual criticism has only to compare the Authorized Version of 1611 with the Revised Versions and their marginal readings, and especially with the modern speech versions, to perceive what a wealth of material has in late years been made available to biblical scholarship and has contributed to a more adequate understanding of the Bible.

In this manner by the slow but steady processes of trained and expert examination of every line of the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testaments, the world of biblical study is brought nearer to the original documents as they left the hands of their writers. These writings were not supernaturally produced in the beginning, and they have not been preserved to us in any miraculous manner. They bear the marks of human workmanship both in their production and transmission. But with all the limitations under which they have come into our keeping they vindicate their right to a unique and transcendent place in the regard of mankind, and they abundantly justify the long centuries of labor bestowed upon them.

It is probable that in spite of all that critical research

may be able to accomplish in the future, some portions of the sacred text will always remain obscure. But these imperfections are negligible in comparison with the wealth of inspired and inspiring material whose meaning is quite clear and whose vindication has been achieved by the processes of criticism. To the men who have labored in these industries of scholarship the church owes a debt which no mere mention of names can ever discharge, an obligation which only the accumulated gratitude of the centuries to come can reward.

During the past century the books of the Bible have been subjected to searching examination as the result not only of textual criticism but as well by the application of the methods of historical and literary examination. That activity arose as the result of the general scientific movement with its appeal to fact and its rejection of tradition. The discovery of glaring errors in historical or semi-historical documents relating both to political and religious history sharpened the interest of inquirers to apply some method of discrimination to a wide range of ancient writings. The discovery by Valla of the false decretals and the spurious donations by which validation was apparently secured for ecclesiastical pretensions in the Roman Empire, in the times of Constantine and his successors, stirred the scholarly world to further research. The nature and trustworthiness of many types of literature inherited from classic periods came under scrutiny.

It was inevitable that soon or late this process should be applied to the Old and New Testaments. The purely scientific concern for the correct tradition was intensified in

the case of the Scriptures by religious considerations. It was to be expected that such activity would arouse apprehension on the part of those who had no reason to question the familiar theories of biblical authorship, dates and values. The form in which the Bible was received by the church in the eighteenth century, and the views then held regarding its literary history were considered authentic, authoritative and final. To only a few biblical scholars had there occurred such questions as are today the commonplaces of careful Bible study. Something of the work of the textual critic has been indicated. Upon that foundation it was necessary to set the task of literary and historical investigation. To some this seemed unnecessary and irreverent. But it becomes increasingly evident upon study and reflection that in the Bible the student is dealing with a human literature which has the common characteristics of all literary work.

It is clear then that inquiry into the structure and peculiarities of this literature is inevitable. Only timidity and submission to traditional opinions could inhibit from such a task. The merest reading of some books of Scripture shows that they are made up of two or three wholly unrelated parts which were probably at one time separate books; and others are seen to be compiled from various sources by editorial activity which has in turn become responsible for additions to the original material. The frank recognition of these facts is in no way disturbing to the faith of any believer in the value of the Scriptures as the highest literary expression of the will of God. Since these qualities of combination and expansion are evident in other kinds of writing, why should they discredit a set of docu-

ments which have proved their ethical and religious value not only in spite of but in some considerable degree because of these very qualities of human workmanship?

The Old Testament came into the possession of the Christian church carrying certain assumptions and traditions regarding its origin and structure. Jewish opinion asserted that its books fell into three groups of distinctly different value and inspiration. There were the five books assigned to Moses, the authoritative standard of doctrine and conduct and the object of far-reaching and luminous labors of commentation. There was the body of prophetic writings, highly valued though not to a degree approaching the reverence in which the Torah was held. The traditions regarding the authorship of such books as Samuel, Isaiah, Zechariah and the like were regarded as authentic and satisfactory. Then there was the collection of miscellaneous writings which included all the books left over from the two previous lists. Here again tradition was free to insist upon certain sacred names as those of recognized authors. The Davidic origin of the Psalms, the Solomonic authorship of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the exilic date and authenticity of Daniel were not questioned either in the later Jewish community or in the early Christian church. It was not painstaking inquiry on the part either of Jews or Christians that validated these documents; it was only the fact that no one ever suspected any occasion for question regarding them. If there still remained in scribal schools the echoes of recent controversies over Ecclesiastes and Canticles they were soon forgotten in the multiplying labors of Talmudic commentation and Christian evangelism.

There was little effort to question these early opinions for centuries. It should be noted however that the obscure spaces of both Jewish and Christian history lying between the first and fifteenth centuries were not without fruitful work in the field of biblical scholarship, and now and then there were voices raising casual but not insistent questions regarding the ancient traditions. This process of inquiry was greatly stimulated at the period of the Reformation by the light into which the Bible was thrown as the Protestant source of authority over against the papal claims of the Roman Church. The reformers used the Bible with the utmost freedom, giving little heed either to Jewish or Christian notions regarding dates and authorships. One is astonished to see how radical were some of the views advanced by Luther and his contemporaries as compared with the timid conservatism of the second generation of reformers with their favorite doctrine of verbal inspiration. But the modern discipline of the literary and historical criticism of the Bible was yet to be born. It could only come to birth as the child of the new spirit of scientific and historical inquiry that sought to test all the facts in these fields, and to hold fast only to that which could prove its worth.

The modern method of literary criticism of the Bible arose first out of the unrelated but similar inquiries of such investigators as Astruc, Colenso, Simon, and Spinoza. The attention of these men was attracted to certain literary phenomena in Genesis and other portions of the Hexateuch. The variations noted in the use of the divine names in the early chapters of Genesis, the apparent presence of two different narratives of such events as the creation, the deluge

and many incidents in the patriarchal stories led to the gradual adoption of the documentary hypothesis, though not without ebbs and tides of opinion and the rise and fall of other theories such as that of the "fragment" hypothesis. These workers, and those who followed them in this field, men like Ewald, Keunen, DeWette, Stade, Vatke, Wellhausen, Hupfeld, Budde, and a distinguished company besides, attacked the various problems that arose when once the spirit of inquiry was fully released. They did not come to their task for the purpose of challenging and discrediting the traditional views nor on the other hand with the motive of their defense. Rather they came to seek the facts, knowing that whatever were the results obtained by a process carried on in that spirit, truth and religion would profit thereby. Already discredited in its very beginnings is the labor of any man who undertakes the work of criticism merely for the purpose of establishing a preconceived opinion, no matter whether it be conservative or radical. It is only in the atmosphere of free and unbiased research, and with the conflict of opinions which is sure to follow any new proposal that the best values of Scripture and theology emerge.

Thus criticism is both destructive and constructive. It signifies the removal of those things which can be shaken that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. In all of its earlier stages it is sure to be destructive and alarming. It appears to be an audacious digging around the roots of the tree of life. In the Christian church it has brought dismay to multitudes of souls firm in the belief that their inherited and traditional views of the Bible were identical

with the very nature of the divine revelation, and that any modification of such views was heretical and inexcusable. But that sentiment passes away as the discovery is made that the critical inquirers have no personal ends to serve but are only searching for facts. And in the end of the day it becomes clear that as the result of the critical process the Bible has gained immeasurably larger values, and is shown to rest not on heaps of sand but on mountains of rock.

If it has been proved in the process of critical inquiry that the book of Joshua is a part of a sixfold unit called the Hexateuch which has taken the place of the former fivefold Pentateuch; that Moses is only a common denominator for the legislation of Israel rather than the lawgiver which later Hebrew tradition made him to be; that there are four documents in the Hexateuch almost as clearly differentiated as are the four Gospels of the New Testament; that the prophetic and priestly histories are compilations made up from various sources and with differing values; that the Psalms are Davidic only in the sense that this early king of Israel was believed to be a musician and a patron of the music of the sanctuary; that it is questionable whether we have any literary material which directly represents Solomon; that the book of Isaiah is made up of at least three different bodies of prophetic material from different ages of the national experience, and manifests in addition the results of editorial work to a marked degree; that the book of Daniel is in no sense a work of prophecy and that it assumes for purposes of apocalyptic persuasion the name and character of Daniel; that the four Gospels are anonymous and give clear evidences of the usual literary relation-

ships; that the common authorship of the fourth Gospel and Revelation cannot be maintained; that the Pauline authorship of Hebrews is no longer defensible and the relation of the apostle to the Pastoral Epistles is improbable; if, let it be repeated, it has become evident that these are among the conclusions to which painstaking and accurate scholarship has been led, the result is not the discrediting of these portions of the Bible but rather a closer approach to their true origin and purpose. No part of the Bible gains in value merely by being assigned to some distinguished moral leader of the past; its value lies wholly in its own message and urgency.

It is the function then of the literary criticism of Scripture to raise inquiries regarding the integrity, authenticity, credibility and historical value of the documents which make up our collection of sacred writings. One wishes to know whether a book like Nehemiah or Matthew is a single document written by one author or is an amalgam of different works, a composite of various strata of writing. It is also natural that one should ask whether it seems probable that the name attached to a given book like Samuel or the Song of Songs or James is the name of the author, or the hero, or is a mere literary device. One makes inquiry furthermore whether the statements made in a biblical narrative can be trusted, as in the cases of the healing of Naaman the Syrian and the recession of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz. These are not inquiries which are devised for the purpose of discrediting any document, biblical or otherwise. They are the inevitable questions which any thoughtful reader raises regarding the objects of his study. Criticism

therefore is judgment, discrimination, investigation, and when properly pursued it has always the value of eliciting the kind of knowledge desired regarding the materials under examination.

It is not without value in this connection to note the attitude of Jesus toward the Scriptures and his superb freedom in their use. He was nourished upon the Old Testament. He quoted from its various portions as if they were the ever-present background of his thinking. Yet he used them as if they were plastic to his touch. He did not hesitate to show their limitations while he pointed out their values. He contrasted the laws of Israel with his own ideals and maintained that the latter were permanent and complete. To be sure he did not discuss nor question the traditional dates and authorship of these documents. If he knew more of the facts than his contemporaries he wisely applied the law of accommodation, or purposely declined to raise questions which had no value for religion or conduct. But in all other regards his was the attitude of a reverent critic of the sacred Scriptures, and under his interpretation of those ancient documents men's hearts burned within them as they talked with him. The purposeful criticism of the Bible in all its parts may justly claim the example and authority of the Master himself.

It would be a most interesting study to pursue step by step the path of biblical inquiry during the past century in the company of those devout and scholarly men who have labored nobly to disengage the Bible from the cerements of traditional views. Against these men and their published results a volume of protest was raised by those who were

disturbed in their comfortable biblical ideas. It was charged that these critics were disturbers of the peace, that they undermined the citadel of religion, that they spread the spirit of skepticism, and that they denied the divine character of the Bible and of Jesus. No doubt, all these charges could be sustained in individual cases. But time has greatly reduced the spirit of opposition to literary and historical criticism. Today the voices of antagonism are growing fainter and are for the most part reduced to the circle of provincial evangelism and a futile section of the religious press. The process has vindicated itself by its results. The work of criticism has made human and convincing the story of the Old Testament. The prophets and apostles no longer look at us from the dim, unworldly heights of the Sistine Chapel in Michael Angelo's portraits, but from the nearer and more sympathetic levels of Sargent and Tissot.

The work of the Higher Criticism is not completed as yet, though the main lines of its affirmations have been established. It is largely in the region of details that work still remains to be done. Along the broad frontiers of biblical literature its results are accepted, and the great Christian public is well on its way toward complete conviction of its outstanding results and a calm and assured employment of its findings. It is difficult any longer to stir up controversy over the process. The odium once attached to those concerned with it has largely receded. On the foundations laid by the work of devout scholars in this field are building the impressive structures of a rational theology and religious education. The age of apprehension is passing. Our children will not have to fight the battle for freedom through

which the present generation has been passing. The critical spirit that has given reasonable and convincing explanation of the physical universe has provided us with an equally satisfactory interpretation of the Word of God.

The Higher Criticism has forever disposed of the fetish of a level Bible; it has destroyed the doctrine of verbal inspiration; it has set in proper light the partial and primitive ethics of the Hebrew people; it has relieved the church of the responsibility of defending ancient social abuses which received popular and even prophetic sanction in Old Testament times; it has made faith easier and more confident; it has helped the world to turn from the imperfect views of an adolescent stage of the race to the satisfying ideals of our Lord; it has enabled us to understand the varying testimonies to the life of Jesus and the divergent tendencies of the apostolic age; and most of all it has explained the seeming contradictions and conflicts of biblical statement which were in former periods the target of captious and often successful attack.

The work of the Higher Criticism has its purposes and its limitations. It is a means to the better understanding of the Word of God. If it can make more vivid and convincing the pages of the Old Testament and the New it performs an admirable and gratifying service. Whatever helps to the intelligent appreciation of the Bible is of undoubted value, for as Mr. Gladstone wrote, " All the wonders of Greek civilization heaped together are less wonderful than this Book, the history of the human soul in relation to its Maker."

XVI

TRANSLATIONS AND REVISIONS OF THE BIBLE

The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language with the exception of a few chapters in Daniel, a small portion of Ezra and a single verse of Jeremiah, which are written in Aramaic. No original copies of these Hebrew Scriptures exist. The earliest texts that are now available are not older than the tenth or eleventh century of the Christian era. The text we now possess is the result of a vast amount of labor in the comparison of such copies of the Scriptures as have come down from the past both in Hebrew and in the many versions into which they have been translated.

Perhaps the nearest approach to an authentic Hebrew text is to be found in the Samaritan Pentateuch. This is a text of the first five books of the Old Testament dating from the fifth century B.C., the period in which the Samaritan community began its separate existence. That community rejected the other portions of the Old Testament as treasured in the Jewish circle at Jerusalem, and adhered to the Pentateuch alone. Copies of this old text of the Torah have been jealously preserved by the little Samaritan colony surviving at Nablus, the ancient Shechem. These are written in the archaic Hebrew characters that were common before the Aramaic square letters came into use.

This Samaritan Pentateuch is not a translation of the five books, but an independent Hebrew text, and therefore valuable for comparison with other copies of the Pentateuch. The points in which it differs from the accepted forms of that text are chiefly such as pertain to the locality and beliefs of that community, among which is the substitution of "Gerizim" for "Ebal" in the text of Deuteronomy 27:4, thus validating the site of the Samaritan temple. The total number of the variations is quite large and some are of interest. But few are important and these are generally mentioned in the margins of the later English texts.

The earliest translation of the Old Testament was made into Greek, the language that was carried out into the east as the result of the wars of Alexander. It became the language of culture in all the Levant. There were many Jews living in Egypt in the third century before Christ. Tradition affirmed that a translation into Greek was prepared at the order of Ptolemy Philadelphus about 250 B.C. by seventy Jewish translators. It was probably undertaken by the Jewish community as the only means of access to the Hebrew Scriptures. The work was accomplished by various people through a period of a hundred and fifty years. Because of the tradition of the seventy translators it was generally known as the Septuagint, the "Seventy," and is represented by the symbol LXX. Some parts of the work were much more satisfactorily translated than others. Later on private translations of some of the books were found more acceptable and were substituted for the earlier version.

The New Testament was written in this same Greek language, and thus the entire Bible came into the possession

of the early Christian community in this tongue. The writers of the New Testament were familiar with the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scripture and used that version in their quotations from the Old Testament. The fact that Greek was generally understood by educated people throughout the Roman empire was of the greatest advantage to the apostles and early Christian preachers. It was to them in reality a "gift of tongues," for it enabled them to reach people of many local dialects with the gospel in the common speech of the day.

The official language of the empire was Latin. It was almost inevitable that this speech should in time displace the Greek as the church developed its liturgies and literature. For this reason Latin versions of the Bible including both Old and New Testaments were produced as early as the first half of the third Christian century. These are variously known as the Old Latin and the Itala versions. They were translated from the Greek text of the Septuagint and from the Greek of the New Testament. It is not certain in which part of the world these Latin versions were made, as by that time the church was expanding in all directions. But it is thought that Antioch was one of the cities in which they took form.

By far the most important edition of the Bible in the language of Rome was the Vulgate, so called from the fact that it came to be the "common" or "popular" version of the Scriptures. It was made by Jerome, an accomplished scholar who was born about 340 A.D., and at the request of Pope Damasus undertook the task. During fourteen years which he spent in Bethlehem (390–404 A.D.) he brought

out a complete translation of the Bible including the Apocrypha. This work has remained ever since the accepted text of the Roman Catholic church. It is based not on the Septuagint text of the Old Testament but upon the Hebrew, of which he made a study with the help of such aids as he could secure. This version like most of those that came later met the criticism and hostility of church authorities, who in that instance insisted that the Septuagint was the only authentic translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Only slowly did Jerome's version come into favor.

Many popular translations of the Scriptures into various languages of the east were made in the early Christian centuries. There were many communities of Syrian Christians, and for them Syriac translations were made both of the Old and New Testaments. The Jewish people made for synagogue use versions of the Old Testament called Targums, "translations," which were sometimes fairly accurate renderings of the Hebrew text into the Aramaic of common speech, and sometimes free paraphrases which made no effort to be literal. For the Christian population of Egypt several Coptic versions of all or portions of the Bible were made in the fifth and sixth centuries. At the southern end of the Red Sea in Abyssinia, the Sheba of the Hebrew writers, there were likewise Christian influences at work early in the history of the church. There in the fifth century appeared a version of the Bible in the Ethiopic language. In the region which we now know as Serbia and Bulgaria, Ulfilas the apostle of the gospel to the Goths lived and wrought in the latter part of the fourth century. He translated the Scriptures into the Gothic language, the speech

of the barbarians who had raided the districts of Cappadocia and carried off his parents a generation before. A contemporary naïvely says that he translated "all the books of the Scripture with the exception of the books of Kings, which he omitted because they are a mere narrative of military exploits, and the Gothic tribes were especially fond of war."

A Slavonic translation was made in the early centuries for the Slavic peoples, particularly the Bulgars. For the Armenian communities of Asia Minor a version of the Bible seems to have been made in the fifth century. Among the Christians of Syria and Egypt who were overwhelmed by the Arab wave of conquest in the seventh century, there appeared translations of the Scriptures into Arabic. It will be noticed that in these instances the effort was made either to supply a Jewish or Christian community with the Scriptures for purposes of worship and study or to provide the material for missionary extension of the Christian faith.

Similar activities have produced the hundreds of versions of the Scriptures now available for Christian education in all the lands to which the gospel has been carried. One of the most remarkable collections of books in the world is the library of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Hardly less interesting is that of the American Bible Society. There are gathered copies of all the attainable versions of the Scriptures since printing was invented, and many manuscript editions as well. There are books of the curious and fascinating tongues to which only specialists have access. There are the copies of the Old and New Testaments such as one sees on the shelves of the Bible dispensaries in Tokyo,

Shanghai, Singapore, Rangoon, Bombay, Colombo, Cairo and Constantinople. There are the Bibles which have had romantic and fateful personal histories, as the possessions of soldiers, sailors, explorers and adventurers in various parts of the world, Bibles with bullet holes and saber thrusts, Bibles stained with the blood of missionary martyrs, and Bibles blotted with the red ochre of official censors. And besides, there are the quaint and curious Bibles in the early forms of our own speech; Bibles representing all the stages of our English Scripture; Bibles with grotesque errors, like the "Wicked Bible," the "Breeches Bible," and others whose printers were punished for their mistakes.

And that leads naturally to the story of the Bible in our own mother tongue. This story is illustrative of what has been done or must be done in every language in which the Scriptures are translated. Language is a fluid thing. It does not remain fixed for a day. There is therefore constant need of retranslation and revision lest the Word of God be left in archaic and outworn form. Fifty dictionaries of the English language have been issued since the King James Version of the Bible made its appearance in 1611. And if the ceaseless labor of Bible translation and revision has been the price of the measure of biblical knowledge we possess, not less essential has been the process in all other lands where biblical studies are to be kept fresh and timely. A similar future of splendid effort awaits the growing Christian communities in the non-Christian world where the first partial or imperfect versions of the Scriptures are now appearing.

Two impressive names gather to themselves the values

of the story of the English Bible. Of all the work which preceded the art of printing, John Wyclif is the common denominator, and of that which has taken form since, William Tyndale is the representative.

In 597 A.D. the missionary Augustine landed in Kent on the southern shore of Britain. His preaching was not the first Christian message that Britain had heard, for from the second century there had been confessors of the faith. But from his day the growth had been rapid. Yet education was rare and the need of copies of the Scriptures was little felt. Caedmon of Whitby set some of the stories of the Bible into poetic paraphrase as early as 670 A.D. A little later, about 700 A.D., Aldhelm, bishop of Sherborne, prepared a version of the Psalms, partly in prose and partly in verse. The best known Christian scholar of that age was Bede, a monk of Yarrow on the Tyne, who died in 735 A.D. The last book of his version to be translated was the Fourth Gospel, and he finished it in the closing hours of his life.

King Alfred of England, justly called the Great (849–901 A.D.), did much to revive the Christian religion in the realm. He translated portions of the Scriptures into the vernacular, particularly the Psalms. He prefixed to the laws of the kingdom a version of the Ten Commandments and parts of Exodus. The earliest known appearance of the Gospels in English was a paraphrase by a priest named Aldred, who about 950 wrote it between the lines of a Latin copy of the Gospels. Aelfric of Peterborough about 1000 made a copy of the Gospels, and later added several books of the Old Testament as well as Judith and the Maccabees from the Apocrypha.

Soon afterward William the Conqueror came with his Normans to crush the Saxons. The battle of Hastings in 1066 was the beginning of a total change in language, manners and customs. Little was done to promote Bible translation in the first centuries of Norman rule, but two or three versions of the Psalms in the new language served to make it familiar and acceptable.

Out of the stormy period which prevailed in England from the Conquest till the Reformation there rises the impressive figure of John Wyclif. He was an Oxford man, a scholar of distinction, and one of the "morning stars" of the new era of enlightenment and religious reform. They were restless times in which he lived. Political and social troubles made the age of Richard II memorable. Wat Tyler's rebellion was a sign of the times. Famine and plague were frequent. Chaucer was singing the first songs of English poetry. Men were eager for a better order, but church and state were unawakened.

Wyclif saw that one of the greatest needs of the hour was a Bible that the people could use. He therefore planned a translation of the entire Latin Vulgate into the English tongue, which was now settling itself into a combination of the older Saxon and Norman-French which had come in at the Conquest. This translation appeared about 1382, and was soon popularized by the travelling preachers whom Wyclif organized and sent out through the country. They were known as "Lollards," and performed a valuable service in awakening the public mind on religious themes.

Soon afterward, as early as 1388, a revision of Wyclif's

Bible appeared, probably the work of his friend and pupil, John Purvey. This became more popular than Wyclif's own work and largely superseded it. On the foundation of biblical knowledge laid by these versions of the Scriptures the English reformation was built. It must be kept in mind that as yet no printed copies of the Word of God had appeared. All the Bibles were in manuscript form, and therefore expensive. More than this, the practice of reading the Bible was under the ban of the state. Men were fined for possessing or distributing any part of the Scriptures, and even worse penalties were at times inflicted. This was the usual way of suppressing heresies.

About a hundred years after the death of Wyclif, whose bones were dug up and burned as a mark of royal condemnation of the reforms he set going, William Tyndale was born in 1484. In the meantime Gutenberg in 1455 had printed from movable types the first complete Latin Bible, and the study of Hebrew and Greek had made great advances under the influence of the Revival of Learning. The printing press, which began its work in Germany in 1454, was brought by Caxton into England in 1470. Tyndale studied both at Oxford and Cambridge and was so deeply stirred by the intellectual and religious needs of the time that his rejoinder to a churchman of his day has become classic, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plow shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."

Compelled to seek refuge in flight from England he went to Germany, and with the help of friends published two editions of the New Testament in 1525, which were

smuggled into England and met instant acceptance. Henry VIII used every effort to suppress this work, and many copies were publicly burned. But its popularity increased with the efforts made to suppress it. Tyndale himself, still in exile, in 1530 set about the completion of this work by the translation of the Old Testament, which however he did not live to finish. For in 1536, in spite of all the efforts of his friends to keep him safe in his retreat in Antwerp, he was betrayed into the hands of imperial officers, tried, condemned, strangled and burned.

The last words of Tyndale were, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes." Miles Coverdale, the next in the illustrious list of translators, did much to realize the martyr's prayer. He published the first complete Bible in the English language about 1535. It was printed on the continent but seems to have won the favor of the authorities including the king, Thomas Cromwell and Bishop Cranmer. From this time onward Bible translation and publication became the order of the day. A dozen versions of the Scriptures were issued between Coverdale's and the Authorized Version in 1611. The work of Wyclif and Tyndale came to its fruition.

A friend and co-worker of Tyndale's, John Rogers, brought out the so-called "Matthew's Bible" in 1537. This was really the continuation of the work of Tyndale and Coverdale, and yet it received the sanction of Henry VIII within a year after Tyndale's martyrdom. In 1539 Coverdale published a revision of his Bible which because of its larger and more sumptuous form was called "The Great Bible." Several editions of this book were published and

it was scattered widely among the churches of England for the uses of public worship.

In the reign of Mary, the Roman Catholic daughter of Henry, many of the reformers were compelled to take refuge on the continent. A company of these in Switzerland prepared a revision of the Scriptures which was known as the "Geneva Bible," and became very popular. This was completed in 1560. In 1563 Archbishop Parker began with the aid of other churchmen a revision of the Great Bible. This appeared under the title of the Bishops' Bible and soon superseded the other work in the usage of the Established Church. About the same period other workers than the Geneva exiles produced upon the continent a Bible in English for Roman Catholics. It originated in the schools of Douai and Rheims successively and was intended to counteract the influence of the Geneva Version. It appeared in 1609 and was based naturally upon the Vulgate of St. Jerome.

King James I, the successor of Queen Elizabeth, came to the English throne in 1603. The various editions of the Scriptures which had taken form since the days of Wyclif, differing as they did in many features and based upon many different sources, demanded the preparation of a standard English edition of the Bible. In 1611 a royal commission representing the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the City of London completed the work which has for the past three centuries been known as the Authorized or King James Version. It represented the best scholarship of the time. Its stately and beautiful literary style has made it an unfailing source of satisfaction to the English-speaking

world. Although its reception into popular favor was slow, it won its way and has remained until modern times the familiar and cherished version of the Bible.

But it is a far call from 1611 to the present. The changes which have come over the English language have been revolutionary. Words do not now mean what they did in the reign of King James. More than this, much new material for the correction and interpretation of the original texts of the Bible has come to hand through the discovery of other texts and versions than those formerly known. In addition there is the light thrown upon the Bible by archaeological science which has proved of great value. Textual and literary criticism have made their contributions to the study of the Book. A new edition of the Bible became a necessity. The publication of numerous private versions like that of Rotherham added force to this demand.

In 1870 a beginning was made by the organization of two commissions, one of English scholars and one of Americans. The work was prosecuted with diligence until in 1881 the Revised New Testament was published. On the morning of May 20th of that year the entire New Testament cabled from London was printed in the New York Herald, and two days later it appeared entire in the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Times. Three years later the Revised Old Testament appeared, the work of these two commissions.

In various points the judgment of the English revisers differed from that of the American group. It was therefore arranged that the variant readings of the latter should appear

in an appendix, and that after the expiration of the copyright period of fourteen years an edition should be issued giving the American readings in the text itself. During the years that followed the American committee continued its labors in preparation for the publication of the American edition. But just before the expiration of the time limit set, the Oxford and Cambridge presses published a so-called American Revised Version giving in the text the readings of the American committee printed in the appendix of the English version fourteen years earlier.

This action was regarded as unwarranted by the American committee as it failed entirely to represent the status of biblical scholarship in 1899. Accordingly in 1901 the American committee published the American Standard Bible under the imprint of Thomas Nelson and Sons of New York. This is the latest and by far the best of the Revised Versions, which have in informed circles of Bible study largely displaced the archaic readings of the King James Version. There are to be sure many people who still cling to that text because of its undoubted literary qualities. They are apparently less concerned to have a competent translation of the Bible than to enjoy the charm of a familiar rendering. It is as if one should prefer the undoubtedly attractive Fitzgerald version of the Rubaiyat to one of less poetic merit but more faithful to the original Omar. The choice is between a pleasing and well-known rendering of the Scripture and an authentic and trustworthy translation of the original.

Many other versions have appeared in recent years. The present age is almost as prolific in the production of

editions of the Bible as was the sixteenth century. In addition to the more or less official revised versions, numerous attempts have been made to render the Bible more intelligible by means of modern forms of speech or such arrangements of the text as serve to illustrate its literary features. Of the latter class the best illustration is the "Modern Reader's Bible," edited by the late Professor R. G. Moulton. It presents the text of the English Revised Version in such literary form as to make clear the author's conception of the various types of biblical writing. It has the added value of being printed in attractive individual volumes.

The modern speech editions of the Scriptures have become numerous and popular during recent years. They include the Twentieth Century New Testament, Weymouth's, Ballentine's, Moffatt's and Goodspeed's New Testaments, Mrs. Montgomery's version of the Gospels, and more recently Moffatt's Modern Speech Old Testament, and the American translation of the Old Testament by Professor J. M. Powis Smith and three colleagues. These are only a few of the many versions of the Scriptures issued during the past decade, which offer themselves as valuable aids to the interpretation of the Bible. Nor should one omit the version of the Scriptures published by the Roman Catholic Church for the use of its members, and that of the Old Testament issued by the Jewish Publication Society.

XVII

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

Most of the holy books of the various faiths claim some sort of inspiration and authority. This is true of the Vedic hymns, the laws of Hammurabi, the Avesta, the Pitikas, the Granth, the holy book of the Sikhs, and the Koran. In each of the great religions there has been in the hearts of the worshipers the conviction that the literature produced in the atmosphere of the deity or leader they revere is divine. Nor should there be any doubt of this fact on the part of any discerning and reverent soul. God speaks to man by divers portions and in various ways, through many teachers and in many writings. None of the sacred books that have lifted any part of the race to new altitudes of thinking and conduct has lacked something of the Spirit of God. But such phrases as one may with complete assurance apply to these literatures fall short of a proper and satisfying characterization of the Bible.

What is meant, then, by this term as it is used of the Old Testament and the New? And what are the arguments advanced to assert and defend that claim? The most common reasons presented for the inspiration of the Bible are these:

We of the Christian nations have inherited our belief in its inspiration. Our ancestors have accepted this view with-

out questioning, and to us it has come with the sanction of their lives.

Again, the church has through all its history affirmed the inspired character of the Scriptures. To those who accept the authority of the church, of whatever order, this is a sufficient guarantee.

Once more, the Bible claims its own inspiration. The words of 2 Timothy 3:16 are classic: "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." In the closing book of the New Testament are found these solemn words: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." [1]

Further, there is a certain self-attesting quality in the books themselves. When the Bible, rightly understood, makes its appeal to mind and heart it requires no further validation. Its message comes with a sense of urgency possessed by no other literature known to the race.

These are the most important arguments presented in defense of the doctrine of inspiration. There are others that might be mentioned, but they are all in some manner related to these or included in them. Probably they will make differing appeals to different minds.

The argument from the faith of our fathers has the

[1] Rev. 22:18, 19.

right to serious consideration. It is a truth past all doubting that much of the heroism, steadfastness and virtue of the Christian generations behind us was due to the faith the fathers had in the Bible and its inspiration as the Word of God. Lacking that confidence life would have seemed little worth to them. Our age has learned to revise many of their opinions and discredit many of their beliefs. The world in which we live is a wider, freer world. Many of the little systems of the past — political, social, religious — have had their day and ceased to be. But there was something majestic and enduring about the Christian faith and character of those grand men of the past that we may well covet. Is this not sufficient to validate their view of the Scriptures? Some will think it is, but in the changing order of our time a more certain ground is needed. Men must have better grounds of assurance than the faith of other men, even such men as we have known and revered.

Still less satisfactory is the argument from church authority. To the Roman Catholic or the adherent of the Greek Orthodox Church it might be sufficient. Even to a Protestant it is not without deep significance that the religious body to which he belongs has through the years maintained a stout and unwavering faith in the inspiration of the Bible. But it must not be forgotten that the Roman Church which made the first formal and official declaration of the inspired and canonical nature of the Scriptures was the very organization that through the long years did most to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people. After due allowance has been made for Protestant overstatement on this theme, it must be conceded that the Roman Church

has never been favorable to popular use of the Bible, and that it is only today repairing the mistake it made in other centuries by giving a version of the Scriptures to its people. Why should the book have been so long withheld if it was inspired of God?

At first glance the argument from the statements of the Bible itself seems convincing. What more could one wish than the reference of an apostolic writer, whether Paul or another, to "all Scriptures given by inspiration of God?" But a moment's study of the text shows that the writer could have had in mind at best only the Old Testament, the only Scriptures the early Christians knew; unless, as seems not improbable, the term as used in his day included also the apocryphal books. And as to the strong words of the writer of Revelation, no one would assert that they refer to more than that single document; for in his day there could have been no collection of New Testament books. So far, therefore, as validation for the Bible is to be sought in its own words, the argument lacks the essential element of application to the books in which the unique quality of inspiration is most in evidence — the great messages of the New Testament. Moreover, if the inspiration of a work is to rest upon its claim for itself, then the Koran should far outrank the Bible. It is apparent that one must look elsewhere for the real grounds of certainty.

The last of the arguments above named goes much further toward an adequate statement than any of the others. It may seem at first that it is the least definite of the four reasons urged. Probably this is true. Certain it is that the inspiration of the Bible eludes exact definition precisely be-

cause it differs from any quality that bears that name in any other literature or product of human genius. But it is not without reason that one may urge the force of the appeal which the Scriptures make on their own behalf to those who give them the attention which they demand. They make real and urgent claim to reverence and obedience. They bring near to the human soul the sanctions of the divine life and the realities of spiritual experience. They are self-attesting, because their demonstration of their uniqueness is more convincing than any arguments the theologian can frame in their behalf.

If it were left to human choice to prescribe the character of a book that should serve as the supreme religious literature of the race, the fullest embodiment in literary form of the divine ideal, what would such a book be, and what would it be proper to expect of it? At first thought it seems very easy to describe its qualities. For example, it should be written by the hand of God, or by some group of men particularly prepared for their task by divine selection and supernatural endowments. The book thus produced should be a clear and unvarying record of the divine mind, with no suggestion of mistake in matters of fact, norms of conduct, or forms of expression. Further than this, its transmission to the present time, both in copy and translation, should be faithful and inerrant, for there would be little value in an originally perfect document that was marred in the process of delivery to the world of today. Such, one would suppose, would be the nature of a satisfactory Bible, to which one might with assurance attach the title of the Word of God.

Yet nothing is clearer than the fact that we have no such book as that. Furthermore, no such book has ever been known. The claims the Jews made for the five books of Moses amounted almost to that, and the same is true of the Mohammedan assertions regarding the Koran, and of certain other religious groups in behalf of their particular scriptures. But no such claim can be maintained for a moment in the presence of the obvious facts. The Bible makes no demand to be considered a superhuman oracular volume. It possesses the characteristics of its various writers. Each speaks in his own manner. It would be impossible to attribute a sermon of Isaiah's to Jeremiah, or a Pauline epistle to Luke.

This is one of the chief reasons why the doctrine of verbal inspiration has been discarded as incapable of proof and incompatible with the evident facts. If the divine mind dictated to the writers of the Scriptures the substance and form of the writings, there could not be the individuality that characterizes these documents. There is a striking unity of purpose disclosed in them; but their style, vocabulary and point of view are as various as their names. Each writer speaks out of his own experience, and uses his own particular equipment of knowledge and skill. Whatever definition of inspiration is constructed must include these facts.

Nor were the writers of the Bible safeguarded supernaturally or in any other manner from the usual historical and scientific errors to which the men of their age were liable. Their work is not a textbook on either of these subjects. They spoke of events of the past as they understood them. They referred to the facts of nature as they

were known in their day. But the themes with which they were concerned were not in these areas. They used events merely as illustrations of God's purposes for the race, but the truth they were interested to affirm was of vastly greater import than any illustration by which they sought to enforce it.

In the opening chapters of the book of Genesis there are two separate and varying narratives of creation. They do not agree with each other, nor does either of them agree with what scientists would now regard as a satisfactory description of the origin of things. Yet both teach the truth that at the beginning, whenever and whatever it was, God was the Creator, and man was the climax of the process. The men who put these two varying accounts into the same book were not unaware of their differences, but they found in them moral and religious values which made their divergences negligible. The Old Testament and the New exhibit many such phenomena. Whatever doctrine of inspiration is framed must be hospitable to facts like these.

The Bible is not a book whose ethical teachings are all of the same type or value. It discloses the depths to which human nature can at times descend and out of which it must be lifted. The moral levels of each generation as set down in the Old Testament were subject to the criticism and correction of a later age. A law is not final, a custom is not praiseworthy, merely because it is found in the Bible. It may be cited for correction, or as an illustration of crude and discarded usage. Such facts must be included in the definition of inspiration.

The Bible is not a book whose main purpose is the

chronicling either of miracle or fulfilled prediction. Miracle there is when properly defined, and prophecy of a majestic and compelling sort. But these are not the fundamental elements of the book. In fact, every miracle and every prediction could be eliminated from the Scripture, and its supreme values would not be disturbed. Something would be lost, it is true, and we prefer the books as they are, when rightly interpreted. But their purpose lies on higher levels than these phases, however interesting they may be. And any definition of inspiration we may adopt must meet this test.

The Bible discloses certain features in virtue of which we have a right to call it inspired. It is a collection of books produced by men living in the current of the greatest religious movement known to history. It was a movement with small beginnings, but with gradually expanding force. It began in the tribal experiences of a small group of people living in "the least of all lands," and culminated in the supreme life of the ages, and the most vital and pervasive religious institution ever known.

The Bible is a competent record of that movement, and it presents graphic and convincing portraits of some of those forceful personages who contributed to the unique religious education thus organized. In the lives of those men and in the history which they helped to make God seems to have been present as in no other experiences of the past. That was the singular quality of Israel's life. It was no wilful and capricious selection of a favored race. It was the emergence of the best available instrument for a great purpose. That purpose manifests itself in the documents

which record that experience, and this quality in the documents, for want of a better term, we name inspiration.

The Bible is the collection of books in which more evidently than in any other literature there are discovered the profoundest truths of religion. There are pictured the lives of men like Abraham and Moses, who made sure of the reality of God; men like Amos and Isaiah who discovered and declared God's world-ruling sovereignty; men who like Hosea and Jeremiah penetrated the secret of the love of God even for the most unworthy; and One there was who knew the possibility and preciousness of communion with God, and set the world in a way to a transfiguration of life by the discovery.

In this book are found the personalities most worthy of reverence. In loyalty to ideals, in the possession of broadening faith and deeper insight, in the appreciation of the supreme religious values, such men as Samuel, David, Micah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, Paul and Peter take rank as the pioneers in the vanguard of the world's progress toward the life of the spirit.

The Bible reveals to us in glowing hope and partial realization that kingdom of God, that community of redeemed souls and redemptive forces of which Jesus was always speaking. By its help we are able to find our way to God. By its direction we discern his will for us as the most worthful program of life. By the suggestions it offers and the sources of power it reveals we discover that we can actually do his will and fulfill his purposes. By the study of this book redemption, atonement, the life of trust, the glory of rewarding service, and the deepening assurance of

the life eternal are brought within the circle of personal possession. Such values as these are not to be found in like degree in any other literature. And the quality which discloses them in such telling manner we may call inspiration.

When the demand is made for a more definite and compact description of this strange quality, one has to respond that it is not to be compressed into any neat and convenient form. It would be easy to define the sort of inspiration the Jewish rabbis affirmed of their Torah, but that is too formal and mechanical to satisfy. It would be equally simple a process to apply the usual categories of literary and artistic passion to the books before us. But this is too pale a figure to meet the need. The most competent statement that can be made is that the inspiration of the Bible is the total spirit and power it reveals. In the last issue one means by its inspiration exactly those marks of uniqueness and urgency which it exhibits and which make it incomparably greater than any other book in the world.

The wonder is that the Bible shares with other books so many of their marks of human workmanship and limitation, and yet possesses a spirit that sets it in a place apart from all the rest. It is this which baffles definition, and yet is so unescapable a quality of the Scripture. The proof that the book is inspired is its power to inspire. It is the sum of the elements thus made evident to the reflective mind that warrants one in speaking of the Bible as the Word of God, and believing in its enduring value. It is in recognition of these unique qualities that one may apply to the Scripture as a whole the words of the Master engraved as a text in the walls of the building of the British

and Foreign Bible Society, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

Viewed from certain points of approach, it is unfortunate that the Bible has been called the Word of God. The intelligent student finds no difficulty in this title, for he accepts it in the light of all the facts freely spread upon its pages. In comparison with any other of the world's sacred books he finds that it contains in a unique degree the message of God to the race. But to one who is unwilling or unable to pay the price of a competent inquiry into the nature of the book, the title is misleading. It implies far more than the Bible is prepared to guarantee. For even a casual reading of the documents that make up this unique collection shows that they were not written by God, nor even by men who were speaking with supernatural and inerrant knowledge of God's will. No error has ever resulted in greater discredit to the Scriptures or injury to Christianity than that of attributing to the Bible such a miraculous origin and nature as to make it an infallible standard of morals and religion. That it contains the word of God in a sense in which that expression can be used of no other book is true. But its finality and authority do not reside in all of its utterances, but in those great characters and messages which are easily discerned as the mountain peaks of its contents. Such portions are worthy to be called the Word of God to man.

Various opinions have been held as to the seat of authority in religion. By some it is placed in the church. It is not to be doubted that there is a certain moral authority in an organization so revered and efficient as the church of Christ in the world. But those who hold this

view are usually at pains to insist that the definition of the church that may thus be regarded as possessing this special authority is to be limited to the organization to which they happen to belong. No advocate of the supreme right of the Christian organization to the place of control would concede that authority to the universal church. It is rather some particular church that he has in mind.

Others have affirmed that the seat of authority is to be found in the Bible. This was particularly the contention of the later reformers, who felt the need of some authority to oppose to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the infallible church. This led, as has been shown, to fantastic claims for the Bible, such as it never made for itself, nor was prepared to support. The traditional authorships of the Bible were insisted upon as essential to its validity. Some of the theologians almost outdid the rabbinical apologists in their extravagant claims for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. One of their sayings was, "He who says that Moses wrote even one verse of his own knowledge is a denier and despiser of the Word of God." Here the doctrine of inspiration and authority was carried to the limits of the grotesque. Hardly less fantastic was the claim of some of the post-reformation divines regarding the inerrant character of the text of Scripture. Dr. John Owen boldly asserted that the vowel points of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament were inspired. This would be equal to the insistence that the versification, paragraphing and punctuation of our English Bible were determined in heaven.

The Bible as a whole is not an ultimate authority to one who thoughtfully studies it. That is, it cannot be taken

as inerrant and final in all its parts. The command of Samuel to Saul to exterminate the Amalekites would not be regarded by anyone as a proper order for our age. The conduct of David in war would be reprehensible in the thought of our generation, just as it was to the later prophets of Israel. The toleration of polygamy, slavery and blood revenge, which were wholly within the circle of permitted conduct in an earlier time, would be impossible now. In other words, the Bible is not an authority to us on all the questions with which it deals. The anger of Paul at the high priest who ordered him smitten in court, and his advice to Timothy about taking a little wine, we do not accept as examples for ourselves, though we see the naturalness of the manner in which they are mentioned.

Those who accept the Bible as the holiest and most authoritative book we possess always reserve the right to discriminate between those utterances which justify themselves to the conscience and intelligence and those which fail to do so. It is inevitable that one who studies the Scriptures should bring every statement and precept to the bar of his own sense of right, and judge it by that standard. We have to confess that even in the New Testament the same discrimination is exercised by every thoughtful reader. The rabbinical arguments of Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians make no such appeal to us as does his doctrine of justification by faith. The summary punishment of Ananias and his wife leaves us doubtful and questioning, while the message of Peter to Cornelius and his household meets our highest approval. And even in the life of Jesus the same differences appear. So difficult are the narratives

of the demons sent into the swine and the cursed fig tree that many who hold without hesitance to the inspiration and authority of the Book wonder if there has not been some error in the record at these points. They seem inconsistent with the other things we are told concerning our Lord. This makes it evident that the authority which we recognize as truly present in the biblical record does not inhere in the Book as such, nor in any particular portion of it. But rather it is found in the appeal which the Scripture as a whole makes to the moral sense within humanity, and in particular the urgency of the appeal made by certain parts of the record, notably the Gospels and the Pauline epistles.

In the recognition of this fact is found the reason for that controlling influence which the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, has exercised upon the mind and conscience of the world through the centuries. The Book asks nothing for itself in the way of sovereignty over the minds of men. But it exercises that power by the sheer force of its appeal to all that is best within them. Its authority is not formal and arbitrary. It consists rather in the outreaching of the spirit of God in the men who wrote its various parts to the souls of those who study it. It is because the men who speak through the pages of the Bible find us at levels deeper than any other writers we know that they possess for us the element of authority.

And the creation of a standard of right within the soul of the advancing generations is one of the achievements of the Bible. The only standard of right thinking and conduct possessed by anyone is the result of his education in religion and morals. Barbarous peoples approve and prac-

tice customs which are revolting to the moral sense of the enlightened because such practices are not inconsistent with the only standards of morals they possess. Their consciences are quite undisturbed. The people of ancient Israel saw nothing unusual or wrong in polygamy, slavery and cruel treatment of war prisoners. The teachings even of their noblest leaders in the early ages of their history did not disapprove such conduct. The authority of those teachers was hospitable to the manners of such books as Joshua and Judges. That authority does not reach and convince us today. And the very men who followed those first moral leaders of the nation helped to correct those low standards of living. The prophets of one age denounced and forbade conduct like that of their predecessors. Through the centuries of history the advancing groups of those who were sensitive to the leadings of the divine Spirit pointed the upward way of justice, mercy and humility. And the consummation of that process was reached in the life and teachings of our Lord.

It is the record of this progress that the Bible presents. The great personalities of which it speaks make their appeal to the moral sense of the world at just the level they occupied. There are those today who find nothing objectionable in the conduct of the patriarchs. They would be content with a social order in which customs like theirs could prevail. Polygamy is yet practiced in parts of the world and is justified on biblical grounds. For such justification of course its advocates have to go back to an age from which the enlightened portion of the race has made long departures. And it is the Bible itself which has been

the chief instrument in that moral progress. To those who rightly understand this Book, by letting it offer its own explanation of its development and purpose, there is no longer the slightest authority found in it for polygamy. And the same thing may be said in reference to slavery, blood revenge, impurity, falsehood and every other evil thing. The Book through its noblest voices and most of all through the voice of Jesus has made the low and partial standards of the past increasingly unconvincing to those who have seen the larger vision of the kingdom of God.

The authority of the Bible resides in its enlightening and compelling power, which lays upon the soul the imperatives of pure and sacrificial living. It is not an authority which inheres in an institution or a book, but in the sense of rightness created within the soul by all gracious influences, and chiefly by the Bible itself. The Book does not claim to be a carefully prepared manual of conduct. It refuses to accept responsibility for the claim that all of its utterances are rules to be followed. Rather it records the story of the most notable movement in history for the enfranchisement of the human soul from the bondage of ignorance, superstition, lust, hatred and pride, and it tells us something of the men who were leaders in that movement which found its full expression in Jesus Christ. It asks us to study the lives and ideals of these great souls, and make them, as far as they find us with their majestic appeal, our friends and examples. In some of them early in the movement one finds little to admire or imitate. Yet every one in the measure of his knowledge and power was a pioneer in the great adventure of making a new world.

The life of Jesus, which is exhibited only in this literature, is the climax of this process. We do not know very much about him as compared with that which we should like to know. All the records of his life would not fill an issue of the morning paper. Furthermore, the only records we have of his life come to us through the writings of men who did not themselves fully understand the character they were seeking to make known. They could only do the best they were able in making their contemporaries and those who should follow them comprehend something of that life that to them was past all language wonderful. In the final issue of facts it is that life which has become the authoritative norm of conduct for the race. Imperfectly presented as it is, and not fully understood either by its first interpreters or any of later time, the life of Jesus is increasingly the disclosure of the soul of God, the exhibition of a normal, perfect human character and the center of the world's desire.

The Book that can present a life like that, under whatever limitations, is certain to have a unique note of authority for all who have the least sensitiveness to moral ideals. It finds us and holds us. It follows us through all the ways in which we try to find rest in our search for life abundant. It waits for us at the bypaths where we think to find another sort of good. It pursues us with swift insistent feet all the long day of life. It will not let us go. It is this divine and terrible authority which follows us with the whips and scourges of the eternal love, until we dash ourselves into the abysses of unreturning refusal, or take with gladness the cup of life from the hand of God.

It is conceivable that we could have had a book of rules which would have been a final and infallible guide to conduct. But the Bible is not that, though some men have so claimed. Others have sought to compile from its contents such an anthology of thinking and behavior. But this is futile. The first essential of character is the responsibility for a discriminating choice among the options offered by life. If someone could draw up for us such a schedule and guarantee us salvation on terms of compliance with it, there would be strong temptation to close with the proposal. So strong indeed that some who claim the right have offered just such a bargain in the name of the church. But salvation cannot be purchased upon any such cheap and easy terms. Salvation is character. Character can be gained only by the agony of deliberate and convinced choice, and the struggle to make that choice controlling in life. So in the end of the day, the authority of the Bible is just the appeal which it makes to men to close with the supreme opportunity, as Jesus did, and live his life after him. The authority of the Bible is the authority of the supreme Life of which it speaks. And linked with it are all the other forceful lives in that same group, in the measure in which they make to the reader the appeal of character and teaching.

For this reason the authority of the Bible cannot be formal, arbitrary or capricious. It cannot consist in oracular words and phrases. It cannot inhere in rules of living. These all may have value, but the power of the Bible in human life lies in its ability to inspire in those whom it really reaches a principle of thought and life which makes them a law unto themselves. Out of the best that the

prophets and apostles have spoken one may organize a norm of living which becomes compelling. To him the character and message of the Lord become final. He has in some competent measure the mind of Christ. Within the enlightened and loyal soul itself there is set up a standard of ethics and religion to which the appeal of every decision must be referred. Into the creation of this standard many factors enter. But it must be confessed that the Bible is the most impressive. And in this fact, and the control which issues from it into the lives of the saints of all the years, lies its unique authority.

The Bible has been the object of vicious assaults at various times from people who imagined that its frank disclosure of the faults and sins of some of its characters carried along the implication of approval or at least of condonation. It is a most superficial reading of its pages that could warrant such judgment. The pictures of human society which it presents are true to the life. But they are never set down merely for the sake of the narrative, in the spirit of a reporter who is seeking the sensational and scandalous. They have always a reason as they are portrayed in the pages of this Book.

The Bible is an attempt to reproduce the social and religious ideals of various ages in primitive and later history. The sins of otherwise good men are told as warnings. The low morals of individuals and communities are reported with no love of the vile conditions described but with the purpose of showing the depths from which humanity has been lifted and is evermore being lifted by the grace of God. Just as the simple and crude conditions out of which

some national hero has risen are described for the purpose of making more vivid and convincing the later greatness of the man, so the rough and brutal features of Old Testament times are recorded to set in clear contrast the results of prophetic ministry.

Human history is in many places a tragic story of mistake and misadventure, sometimes unconscious, the result of ignorance, and sometimes deliberate, the outcome of perverse and foolish impulse. No honest account of individual, tribal or national experiences is free from features of this nature. They could be glossed over or expurgated, but a frank and truthful treatment of history takes neither course. It sets them down for just the lesson they ought to teach.

The Bible has also these features. It has the evidences of the immature and false ideas out of which it was the task of the spirit of God to lead the race. It has some terrible chapters, proofs of the depths to which humanity can fall. But no true picture can be drawn of the long and slow evolution of moral ideals without hints of the primitive life out of which escape was at last made. The Bible reveals with a frankness which is at once startling and undeniable the sins that war against the soul and the low standards of morals prevailing in ages when those sins were counted virtues. But no one with power to discriminate between childhood and maturity would betray himself into the disingenuous assertion that all alike meet the approval of the Book.

A volume that made any such impression upon its readers could not hold for a moment the place which the

Bible has in the regard of the race. Its overwhelming vindication, its right to the world's reverence, are found in its appeal to the intelligent and sensitive spirit, its illustrious history as the guide of those movements which are bringing in the new day, its ability to turn the current of history out of its former channels in the directions pointed out by the spirit of God, its power to transform nations from savagery and superstition to intelligence and virtue, and its daily record of transfigured lives, the real "twice-born" men of our age. In such fruits its best defense will ever be found. And after all the superficial theories of its origin and nature have faded from remembrance, and all assaults upon its character have fallen by their own futility, it will still continue on its beneficent way, the enlightener of the nations, the record of the divine struggle in behalf of the soul of man, the authoritative literature of the holy life.

XVIII

THE CONTINUING WORD

The Bible is not all there is of the word of God. It is the most evident and tangible embodiment of that word, and the surest proof that the Eternal has manifested himself in human experience. Yet assurance is given by one of the writers of the Christian documents that God spoke to the fathers of Israel in various manners and at different times.[1] And what he did in ancient times he has been continuing to do through the centuries. There is no closed circle of divine revelation. God is ever speaking to the race, through the stern lessons of history, through the mutations of human experience, and through the lives of choice and elect souls who perceive more fully than their fellows the vision of truth, and make it known.

The word of God was disclosed to Israel in the measure of the capacity of that people to comprehend and interpret it. It came to complete manifestation, such as one life could offer, and one generation could comprehend, in the revelation of our Lord. It found expansion and illumination in the lives and messages of Jesus' first interpreters and the Christian community which took form under the inspiration of his life. It has continued to spread through the ministries of the church and other groups that have taken seriously the divine message, and have endeavored to exemplify and dis-

[1] Heb. 1:1.

close it to mankind. In a very true sense the church as well as the Bible has been the embodiment of the holy word. And in the final issue it is the individual believer who vindicates and illustrates the enduring and expanding truth. All history is the exemplification of this widening and deepening potency of the word of God. It cannot fail of its appointed purpose. It is destined to accomplish the divine pleasure, and prosper in the thing whereto it is sent.

In the golden age of Greece, when Athens had attained almost the summit of her intellectual and artistic life, there fell a blight upon the city that threatened its eclipse. A deadly plague decimated its population; neighboring states, stirred to enmity by the splendor of Athenian achievements, ringed it about with hostile intent, and even the strong spirit of Pericles was daunted by the signs of disaster. In such a time he summoned the people to take heart again by pointing them to the spreading influence of Hellenic culture through the islands and on the mainland of Attica, and insisted that even as the eyes of the goddess Athena, the patroness of the city, whose gold and ivory statue towered above the Acropolis, looked out across the lands, so the spirit of her people and her institutions was imperishable, a power that should bring again her glory and restore her supremacy. Her message to humanity could not fail.

In the days of the great dispersion, after the king of Babylon had visited his wrath upon Jerusalem, and her people had found their way either by exile or escape to other lands, when the fortunes of the holy city seemed at their lowest, and few of her surviving citizens dared to

hope for better days, there was lifted a voice of consolation and assurance. The prophet who lifted that voice we do not know. Like much of the ancient Hebrew writing, his message has come to us without a name. But it is gathered under the sheltering mantle of the great Isaiah of an earlier age, and is known to the modern reader as the oracle of Israel's redemption, the work of the Second Isaiah. In thrilling words the seer pierces the gloom of the present depression, and announces in confident terms the gathering of the scattered refugees back to their homeland, and the re-establishment of the nation's institutions. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God," is his key-note, and the certainty of the coming restoration of Judah is his confident augury. All the signs to be sure are unpropitious, and the days are filled with gloom. There is no king in Israel, and the search for leaders seems vain. The people are like grass, which springs up in the morning and in the evening is cut down and withers. But the prophet is undismayed. The promises of the Eternal are firm as the hills. The assurances of national survival given in the divine name through the generations cannot prove frustrate. "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God abides forever." [2]

With still greater faith in that unfailing word, a Christian teacher of the first century fastened on that ancient oracle to strengthen the courage of scattered believers throughout the Graeco-Roman world. His was a different theme. To him the utterance signified was not so much the ancient divine promise to Israel, nor the assembled

[2] Isa. 40:8.

writings of the classic Scriptures, but the vital, seminal, expanding and enduring word by which his disciples in the Christian mysteries had been reborn into the holy life. As compared with that disclosure of eternal purpose and power all other things were as the grass of the earth, and all human interests as the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower falls, but the oracle of good tidings, the word of the Lord, abides forever.[3]

That universal revelation of the nature and will of the Highest was the element declared by Israel's ancient priest-prophet, the Deuteronomist, to be indispensable to the life of man. In words quoted by our Lord in the days of his temptation he insisted that man does not live by bread alone, but by every forthputting, utterance, disclosure, manifestation of the character of God.[4] It is the discovery of the divine nature and purpose that is the quest of every sensitive and inquiring spirit. It is the cry of the heart in all religions, and in varying degrees the answer is the voice of God. There is an unquenchable confidence in the mind of the race that at the heart of things there is One higher than the highest with whom we have to do, a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness, an intelligence that is responsive to the cry of faith.

That this infinite life speaks to men has been the belief of the world from the dawn of religion. This is but natural. Man is the one voluble creature, and the fact that he is always talking inclines him to attribute the same speaking character to the being he worships. All the faiths of the nations have held this opinion. Their sacred scriptures are

[3] I Pet. 1:24, 25; [4] Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4.

largely believed to be the utterances of deity to prophetic souls who recorded them. And though much may be allowed to the loquacious disposition of men in their effort to interpret the Eternal, yet the well-nigh universal consciousness that there is an outflowing of the divine life, a disclosure of the meaning of the universe, of which due account may be taken, is not to be disproved or denied. Of that supreme unfolding of truth all who have receptive natures have been in some measure aware. Some, men of truly discerning mind, have understood much. One there was who seems to have caught the full meaning of that mystery.

The holy men who spoke in time past, whether they were prophets or apostles, whether they had in mind specific utterances of the Highest, or the gathering collection of revered documents, or the life-giving message of the gospel, were insistent that the divine word was vital, pervading, abiding. To be sure other things of which they spoke had the quality of endurance. Koheleth says of the earth that it abides forever, as contrasted with the generations that come and go. A psalmist says of Mount Zion that it cannot be removed, but abides forever. But some of them perceived that there are things that are more truly timeless and enduring, eternal in their essence, outlasting the hills rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun. Paul's Psalm of Love affirms this fact when he declares that beyond all gifts and possessions faith and hope and love endure. In some such sublime sense the holy word, the revelation of God, continues.

Not less is it vital, life-giving. That majestic figure of

speech by which creation is described as taking place in obedience to the word of the Most High holds a deeper truth than the brief record discloses. The entire creative process, from the dim beginnings of this and every other world, has been the result of an age-long, indeed an ageless, forth-putting of the divine energy, an impartation of the divine life, such as Jesus described when he said, "My Father has always worked, and I work." Through all the long romance of the race, whether we call it evolution or give it any other name, it is a divine enterprise, and the outflowing, the infusing of the life of God through all the vast adventure, from saurian to saint, is just another illustration of the fact that no creature lives by bread alone, but by every outgiving of the life of God. That vital, germinal manifestation is the secret of every grade of being, and finds its climax at the highest level the creative process has yet attained, in that new order of men of whom the apostolic writer declared that they were "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which lives and abides."

Still more impressive is the expansive, universal nature of this self-disclosure of the Eternal. It is world-wide, and so far as we know, as all-inclusive as the universe. It was natural for the Hebrew writers to magnify the office of their nation as the custodian of the divine favor, the race chosen above all others to enjoy the favor of heaven. Of the attainment of signal privilege and insight by some of the spiritual leaders of that people there is ample evidence. But the testimony of the most discerning of that order disclaims any such exclusiveness of divine favor for Israel, and insists with

Amos that if God made himself known in any selective manner to that people, the greater was their responsibility, the more evident their peril.[5]

Indeed the Second Isaiah set the type for a new and wider interpretation of the nature of God and the function of Israel. He declared that new patterns of the divine undertaking were appearing. Other people than the Hebrews were to be gathered under the divine protection. As he had given to all the breath of life, he would likewise give them the bestowments of grace. Whenever Israel is redeemed, the heathen are to share in the blessing, for they are his children, the work of his hands. The holy task of the nation is the giving of light to the rest of the world. The Restorer of Jacob is also to be the leader and commander of the remnant of the peoples. Foreigners are interested onlookers at the drama of Israel's humiliation and eventual glory. They are to be blessed with the same mercies promised to the house of Judah.[6] Malachi insists that all sincere worship offered to their gods by the heathen is accepted by Jahveh as offered to him.[7] The Son of Sirach says of the divine wisdom, "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, . . . and in every people I gat me a possession."[8] That God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him, is the startling and revolutionary statement of the newly-enlightened Peter at the home of the Roman captain in Caesarea;[9] and Paul and Barnabas in the gates of Lystra asserted that the living God had not left

[5] Amos 3:2; [6] Isa. 42:1–4; 49:6, etc; [7] Mal. 1:11; [8] Ecclus. 24:3, 6; [9] Acts 10:34, 35.

himself without witness among any people.[10] Surely and steadily that message reaches all humanity. It is the privilege and responsibility of all to carry it onward to the ends of the earth. Alike to those who accept and those who reject it comes the word and the obligation. As truly upon the pagan as upon the Christian rests the burden of the divine evangel. The only difference is that one of them has acknowledged the responsibility which the other still disclaims. The spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come.[11]

The marvel of the spiritual life is this outflowing, penetrating, pervading, undepleted life of God, seeking everywhere an entrance to the soul of man. For the word of God is the life of God. Like other terms in a vocabulary that breaks under the stress of truth which it cannot wholly express, our poor symbol, the very term "word" itself, runs about in nervous breathlessness trying to perform all the labor we impose upon it. And so out of desire to rid it of some of its load, the writers of the Scripture employed other phrases which mean the same thing. They spoke of the breath of God, the angel of God, the spirit of God, the face of God, as well as the word of God, and by all these devices they sought access to that central mystery of the divine being for which they had no adequate definition, any more than have we. Perhaps there was also in their usage a certain courteous reserve in their approach to the Infinite. They were setting a thin veil before their faces that they might not too rashly intrude into the intolerable glory of the holy presence. But of that presence they were over-

[10] Acts 14:15–17; [11] Rev. 22:17.

whelmingly aware, and they have searched the deeps of human speech to make it known.

If the image of God employed by the moral leaders of other days is too anthropomorphic to satisfy the more scientific and philosophical age in which we live, at least it had the value of personality and relationship, and in some true measure satisfied the generations that were beginning to feel after God if haply they might find him. That quest is ceaseless and unwearied. Men have spoken of him by all the names graven on Akbar's tomb, and yet there is no approach to finality of characterization. This is both the despair and the stimulus of all religious thinking. The idea is immeasurable, not to be shut up in any definition. Yet to the aware spirit it is the truest reality. In this it differs from all the ethnic faiths. To Hinduism the one reality is the Brahmin, the twice-born, the wearer of the sacred cord. All else is maya, illusion. In Buddhism it is the unchanging calm of Nirvana, symbolized by the motionless and meditating Dai-butzu. To the Christian the great reality is God, pictured in many forms and fashions to the fathers by the prophets, but in the end of the days revealed in a Son. And therefore intimate, immanent, precious, of whom one may say with assured confidence:

> "Thou life within my life, than self more near,
> Thou veiled Presence, infinitely clear;
> From all illusive shows of sense I flee
> To find my center and my rest in Thee."

It is of this Being, the Father-God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that a forceful writer of the past gen-

eration has spoken in one of the truly great poems of the language:

"Whoso hath felt the spirit of the Highest,
Cannot confound, or doubt him, or deny.
Ay, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I." [12]

It is that authentic witness of the soul to the reality of the Divine that has been the joy of the mystics through all the years. And in due measure it is the experience of any who may be willing to pay the price demanded of the pilgrims of the inner way.

Incredible therefore would be the doctrine that the disclosure of the mind and will of the Eternal could be limited to one people or one age of human history. It is Lowell who insists:

"God is not dumb that he should speak no more.
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness,
And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor.
Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves, nor leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair and hope, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,
While thunders' surges burst on cliff of cloud,
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit."

The most impressive literary expression of this abiding, pervading word is the collection of documents we call the

[12] F. W. H. Myers, *St. Paul.*

Bible. This body of writings is not the only sacred book. All the religions that have attained any maturity and reached cultural estate have developed a literature of less or greater value. Of such sacred books there are many, and none of them is without significance. But above them all the Bible lifts itself in majesty and authority. This is not because of any more imperious claim on its part, for there are other holy writings that exceed it in their assertions of inspirational origin. But this Book vindicates its right to the supreme position by its uniqueness and its peculiar moral and spiritual urgency. It is not a perfect work, either in historical, scientific or ethical matters. It is rather the record of two great movements in the development of religion. The Old and the New Testaments are the supreme chapters in the account of the world's discovery of God. In the experience of the Hebrew people there appeared a group of men singularly sensitive to the moral and religious aspects of life. More than any others in the contemporary life of the world they were impressed with the imperatives of morality and holiness.

Their order arose from crude beginnings. The prophets and priests of each generation preached and taught as they understood the divine will. They were not all of the same mind. As time went on they revised, corrected and reshaped the teachings of their predecessors. Some of their utterances were written down, probably after considerable periods of oral transmission. Much that they said perished in the mutations likely to befall any ancient writings. But some oracles survived, and all that thus remained was at length gathered into this collection which we know as the Old

Testament. It speaks with many voices and with varying authority, but it records the world's most illustrious early adventure in the areas of faith in a God of justice and holiness. And while it neither claims nor exhibits inerrancy in fact or doctrine, it discloses the process of that gradual achievement of fellowship with the divine on the part of choice and elect souls, in virtue of which they spoke with an urgency and conviction which for want of a more adequate term we call inspiration. It is because of that fact and all its implications that one has the right to affirm that the Old Testament is in some true sense the word of God. If demand is made for a perfect document, inerrant and final, we have to confess that we do not possess it, nor did it ever have that character. But if the surviving literature of the most remarkable people of antiquity is sought, a people some of whom caught the vision of God and were thrilled by the disclosure of his purpose, then the Old Testament has a valid claim to its unique position among the spiritual treasures of the race.

Immeasurably more revealing and compelling is that later body of writings which we call the New Testament. This is inevitable. It is gathered about the person and ministry of our Lord. Its writers were his first interpreters. From him they drew their impulse and their ideals. They were haunted by the glory of his nature and the finality of his teachings. When he had left them they looked back upon his life with wistful longing for his return, and felt that his stay had been like that of a pilgrim who pitched his tent with them for a night and then vanished.[13] But he left

[13] John 1:14.

with them the ineradicable impress of the life of God, who was to him the supreme reality. And for that reason Jesus has evermore to his vast fellowship of believers the value of God, just as Buddha has to another great company. But the person of the Master is the historic embodiment of those ideals and forces which he proclaimed. In him the love, purity and righteousness of which the prophets had spoken as the characteristic qualities in the life of God were exhibited in supreme form. His serene faith in the Father and in that way of life of which he ever talked to his followers set him in a place apart from all the founders of the world's religions. He not only preached his religion; he was it.

At the heart of the good news he proclaimed was the recognition of the outflowing life and love of God, and the passion to mediate that divine disclosure to the world. The outpoured life of God, faintly symbolized in the crude and often repellent cultus of animal sacrifice, was and is evermore the central fact of life. The spirit of sacrifice was therefore the impulse that controlled his ministry, as it must be the guiding principle of every purposeful and successful life. His goal was the cross, not as a spectacle or an episode, but as the consummation and interpretation of his career and his message. The cross of Christ is not an isolated fact, but the unveiling of a cosmic and unescapable principle. It is the growing recognition of this fact which invests the Lenten days and Holy Week with their increasing meaning in the revolving year.

It was the cross to which Jesus steadfastly set his face from the long days in the Judean wilderness, as the only

escape from compromise and failure. It is the revelation of his life and of the life of God as made known by him to his brothers in the great human circle. In virtue of the cross Jesus has become in the fullest degree the continuing word of God to the ages. His life and death have hemispheric meaning. It was a costly life to live. It was a tragic death to die. It is not an easy recital to give to our self-satisfied and self-indulgent age.

> "Not in soft speech is told the earthly story,
> Love of all Loves! that showed thee for an hour;
> Shame was thy kingdom, and reproach thy glory,
> Death thine eternity, the Cross thy power."

Through the power of his cross he became the enduring word of God, the eternal Logos.

In a very true sense the Fourth Gospel with its supplement in the First Epistle is the crowning utterance of the New Testament. Scholarship has found in the Synoptic Gospels a more graphic and authentic narrative of the life of the Lord. But the Fourth Gospel gives the supreme, the mystical, the satisfying interpretation of the incarnate Word, which has justified through the centuries the title for the writer — whoever he was — of St. John the Divine, the theologian, the philosopher *par excellence* of the early church. His conception of Jesus as the Logos — whencesoever that idea came, Heraclitus, Philo or another — is no mere device of Christian dialectic to mediate to Greek philosophic thought the Christian doctrine of the divine revelation. In its deep significance it is the truest and most authoritative interpretation of the character and mission of

the Lord. That which the Baghavad Gita, the Indian Song of Songs, did for Hinduism, that which the Lotus message of Mahayána Buddhism did for the faith of Ceylon and Burmah, that and more the Fourth Gospel has done for Christianity. Krishna, the teacher and warrior, became the avatar and epiphany of deity; Siddartha, yogi and mendicant, became the Buddha, the Enlightened; Jesus, the prophet and servant of humanity, became the Logos and the incarnation of the eternal God.* Harnack says, "The incomparable significance of this personality as a force still working — this is the essence of Christianity."

The marvel of the life of Jesus is the fact that though he was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, yet he transcended all the categories of our fragmentary lives, looked deep into the crystalline heart of the universe and spoke for all time the essential truths of the spiritual life. It was his to utter a universal and perpetual message. He did not permit himself to be misunderstood as saying, Other teachers may speak as they will, but for myself and my followers these shall be the rules of the order: Love your enemies, forgive those who persecute you, take up the cross and follow me. No. He made it clear past all misapprehension that these and his other teachings are universal and eternal truths; that God being what he is, and man such as history proves him to be, that everywhere and always it is true that he that asks receives, he that seeks finds, to him that knocks it is opened; that the meek inherit the earth; that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are filled, and that the pure in heart see God.

* Saunders, *The Gospel for Asia.*

That is why the ethic of Jesus seems romantic and impracticable. But human nature has the same qualities, and in the final issue the ideals of Jesus, severely applied, are shown to be superbly practicable, and the only ideals that will work in the stress of experience. Jesus has offered a pattern of behavior far more contagious and compelling than that of Confucius, the most widely revered sage in all history. In his estimate of the value and splendor of human life Jesus stands unapproachable, mountain-high, like Everest or Fujiyama. Where the Buddha and Laotse offered engaging precepts, Jesus exhibited the life of God. And at the long last it is God of whom the ages wish to know. No matter how eloquently a prophet or sage may speak on any other theme, if he has nothing authentic and assuring to proclaim concerning the Eternal, he may well keep silence. The cry of humanity is still and evermore the anxious word of Philip, "Show us the Father."

It is this that makes convincing the life of our Lord as the eternal revelation of God, the puissant Master of the spiritual realm. It was this timeless quality in his character and teaching that inspired the author of Hebrews to affirm that he "through an eternal spirit offered himself." [14] His eternity lay in his ability to transcend the things of time and place and live in the world of eternal realities. Quite above the level of theological controversies regarding his preexistence, Jesus could say with austere and tranquil finality, "Before Abraham was, I am." [15] And the same Christian teacher who has furnished us the passage regarding the continuing word declares that the Christ "was foreknown be-

[14] Heb. 9:14; [15] John 8:58.

fore the foundation of the world, but was manifest at the end of the times for our sakes." [16] By these words he rightly audits the timeless nature of our Lord's redemptive work. Koheleth says that to every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven. That God has made everything beautiful in its time. But also that he has set the world, the universe, *'olam,* eternity, in men's hearts,[17] and they are faint with longing till they transcend the things of time and place, and attain this purer air, this wider view. The cry of the soul is evermore:

> "I stifle here in this narrow place,
> Sick for the infinite fields of space."

It is this homesickness of the human heart that the Master alone can satisfy by his demonstration of the fact that he is the way to God, the source and fount of being; that he is the ageless and world-embracing truth; and that he is the life eternal. To know him and the Father, as he said, is to possess eternal life. These are the chief factors in that "good news" of love, which he declared to be the sum of the law and the prophets. When Paul penned that incomparable Psalm of Love he was unconsciously or deliberately setting down the biography of Jesus. You can substitute his name in every sentence where that magic word "love" appears, and the meaning will be the same. And of him as of love one may well say, "He never fails . . . and, he abides." "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever." [18]

[16] Eccl. 3:11; [17] I Pet. 1:20; [18] I Cor. 13:13; Heb. 13:8.

So the New Testament whose theme is the word made flesh sums up and completes the Old Testament, in which the prophets spoke the enduring word to the fathers. They are the two parts of the perfect whole. Each is incomplete without the other. Alone, the second lacks perspective and background. Without the second, the first is like a torso without the head, a story without a sequel. The four bands of mystic sculpture around the dome of Arthur's palace fittingly symbolize, two of them the Old Testament, and two of them the New:

> "And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
> And in the second men are slaying beasts,
> And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
> And on the fourth are men with growing wings."

The two divisions of our Bible are like the two portions of the Homeric epic, the grandest in literature. The Old Testament is the Iliad of the race, in which fierce contest is waged, and victory comes at last only after bitter struggles and many tragic defeats; even as to the Greek hosts "far on the ringing plains of windy Troy." The New Testament is the Odyssey of the human soul, telling the story of how after long wanderings and sore distresses, it comes by the grace of God, back to its long-sought home, the land of heart's desire.

Not only is the continuing word contained in the holy Scriptures with their glorious messages of prophets, priests, psalmists and sages, apostles, evangelists, and One greater than all, the supreme Life; it is evident in the outflow

of the Christian movement in the world, and in the church which has been its active interpreter that word is likewise disclosed. Not without valid reasons has the Church of Rome, the oldest of the communions of western Christianity, insisted that the word and spirit of God abide in the living church as well as in the Bible. Neither is perfect. Both show the marks of human workmanship and the limitations of human understanding. But both have proved themselves to be instruments through which the spirit of God has wrought efficiently for the enlightenment and the enrichment of mankind. The authority which they possess is not that of an inerrant record, nor an infallible code of morals; not that of a miraculously founded institution, nor a body of supernaturally inspired and safeguarded tradition. The claims of both Protestant and Catholic in behalf of the Bible and the church demand examination and revision.

Nevertheless, in spite of their limitations and defects, they have proved themselves through the centuries the chief means by which the life of God has been disclosed and mediated to the world. The process has been slow and fitful. Just as the Old Testament is the record of a hindered and painful development of ethical and religious ideals, so the church has advanced through alternate days of gloom and light to fuller perception of the teachings of Jesus and ampler exemplification of the will of God. The mistakes of the church have been many and costly. It has wasted valuable years in fruitless millenarian speculations; it has blundered through decades of unhappy theological controversy; it squandered its substance and the manhood of half Europe in the bloody tragedy of the crusades; it indulged in bitter

persecution of infidels, Jews and heretics; it has taken pride in ecclesiasticisms, rituals, creedal formulations, movements, spasms of promotional zeal and crude forms of evangelism, and in the accumulation of numbers and wealth. Worst of all, the divisions of the church have been an open scandal and a confession of weakness. Yet in spite of these and other manifestations of the world passion for the spectral symbols of success, the quiet inner life of the church has gone onward from generation to generation, largely uninfluenced by such surface appearances of strength or weakness. Like Ezekiel's river, flowing from beneath the threshold of the temple:

> "Ever with so soft a surge and an increasing,
> Drunk of the sand and thwarted of the clod,
> Stilled and astir and checked and never ceasing,
> Spreadeth the great wave of the grace of God."

Notwithstanding all the mistakes which have been made in the name of Christianity, whose survival of them is the most luminous proof of its divine character, the church has gone onward, lengthening its cords and strengthening its stakes, and stands today the most conspicuous and majestic of institutions, the living embodiment of the great undertaking which Jesus conceived, and the vital expression of that enduring word, germinal, diffusive, unhurried, victorious through the years.

This is no mere apologetic claim by partisan and advocate. It is the testimony of the centuries and the continents and is vindicated by achievements. Christianity

and the Christ who is its Lord laid compelling hands on Hebrew history and made it a servant and a herald; on the Roman empire, and transformed it into a Christian state; on Greek philosophy, and converted its dialectic to the uses of the new faith; and on the darkest and most tragic ages in European annals, and through the ministries of humble and sacrificial lives, like those of St. Francis and the morning stars of the Reformation, brought to birth a new world. And in our own day the Master, through this same imperfect instrument, is yet laying his transforming hand on the modern curses of humanity: race and caste prejudice; the vile traffics in intoxicants and narcotics, the chief menaces of our social order; the spirit of industrial intolerance, on the part both of capital and labor; the craze of militarism, with its tinsel and millenary, its jingo slogans and its pseudo-patriotism; the arrogant effrontery of certain forms of big business in their unholy and defiling traffic with politics; and all the false pretenses and the hollow shams of the world, the flesh and the devil masquerading too often in the evening dress of polite society or even in the livery of the church. In the measure of the loyalty of such of his friends as are true-hearted and unafraid, he is winning his victories and, as in the first days of the church, creating a new heaven and a new earth. For such conquests he alone is sufficient. No other can bend the bow of Ulysses, no other can strangle the twin serpents of sin and suffering.

Perhaps it is in its contacts with the great faiths of the world that Christianity based upon the Bible has come to its best moments of self-criticism and has begun to win its most enduring successes. It is because there is in it the

power to answer the world's wistful questings after truth, to meet its most baffling problems with an assuring solution, that it finds increasing hospitality in the minds of the most intuitive and thoughtful of mankind. There are problems over which the ages have pondered and before which the keenest intellects have sat in silence. There was no wit in their systems competent to unravel the riddles of existence.

> "Earth could not answer; nor the seas that mourn
> In flowing purple, of their Lord forlorn;
> Nor rolling heaven, with all his signs revealed
> And hidden by the sleeve of night and morn."

Christianity has no easy and swift elucidation for these perplexing inquiries which puzzled Zoroaster, or set Moti pondering over the mystery of life, or confronted the Brahmin, sunk in his vast and austere speculations. But in its larger spirit of appreciation of all that is best in the ethnic faiths, Christianity is winning its way to their reverent attention, and is drawing from such self-less and prophet-like souls as Gandhi the glad confession that Christianity is prepared to make an enduring contribution to Asia, and that the loftiest and most authoritative document ever written is the Sermon on the Mount.

An early type of missionary teaching, a type which is not yet wholly superseded, insisted that the glory of the gospel was its complete unlikeness to all other religions; that its serious task was to destroy them as quickly as possible. The Master of Baliol however insists that the glory of Christianity is not to be as unlike other religions as pos-

sible, but rather to be their perfection and their judgment. Dr. Glover says that as the Roman Empire was permeated and overcome by Christianity, so the rest of the world will be, if only it can insist on loyalty to its divine ideals. From the days of the Master the movement which started with him has proved its ability to assimilate the best in the world's systems of thought, fulfilling their aspirations and judging their deficiencies. It is this power of completion and judgment in our holy faith which constitutes the surest token of its finality. It is not alone its capacity for examination and rebuke for what is wrong in the other religions. It is rather its perennial faculty of self-criticism and amendment wherein lies the hope of the future, and the vindication of the claim of this marvelous enterprise to be the continuing word of God to every age and all mankind.

Just as the most outstanding weakness in the church today is its manifold divisions, so the surest token of its coming power is its manifest ability to transcend these divisive limitations and achieve the more generous attitude of love and fellowship. The words of Jesus and Paul are the mandate for the undertaking. That plea for the unity of God's people holds the central place in Christian history and its present evangel. To forget it is to prove recreant to the divine purpose and the holy word. In the spirit of the Scriptures and of the Christ whom they declare the church will come to its true unity, and of that fruition of the hopes of the years the signs of promise hang out like the banners of God against the black-breasted night. The dreams of early Christian prophets and apostles will not fail of realization. One day, toward which we hasten, the church will achieve

its holy destiny, and stand in virginal beauty like the Parthenon, in white splendor like the Taj Mahal; the symbol of a people's hope, the center of a world's desire.

In the final issue it is the individual believer who is the living word. As God spoke to the fathers in the prophets; as some of their messages took form and have found their way to us in the holy Scriptures; as the fullest revelation of the Father came in the person of our Lord, and was transmitted in varying degrees through the lives and preaching of the early disciples and in the writings of early believers; and just as that same continuing word has been proclaimed with greater or less fidelity by the church; so today and in all the days, it finds its utterance and vindication in the lives and speech of the friends of the Lord. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us. The word must always become flesh to be understood. In the life of every preacher of the faith, every teacher of the truth, every missionary at home or abroad, every native Christian in the non-Christian lands, every layman and mother in Israel, the word becomes flesh again in the measure of their commitment to the high program of the Master. Again as always in the past that word is vital, germinal, pervasive, enduring. The most familiar and comprehensive verse in the Scripture is that notable utterance of the Fourth Gospel, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." [19] Yet as truly might it be written, "God so loves the world that he is giving his every begotten son," and that eternal self-bestowal is the secret of the world's redemption, and the hope of the ages. As in all its past manifestation

[19] John 3:16.

to the race it is the ceaseless problem of the divine life, how this word may break through the imperfect media of its transmission. Once only in the long story of the centuries was that problem completely solved, and we have been breathless ever since to catch the last faint echo of that voice.

Happily the adventure is never complete. Around us is the world, and before us the way forward. For that old world is new in promise and opportunity. Like the aged Ulysses, not content with his Ithacan home, lured to fresh ventures, so the follower of our Lord, the seeker after the further treasures of the Word of God, unsatisfied with past attainments, may well repeat the final words of the great Olympian:

"Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world;
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now the strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to fail."

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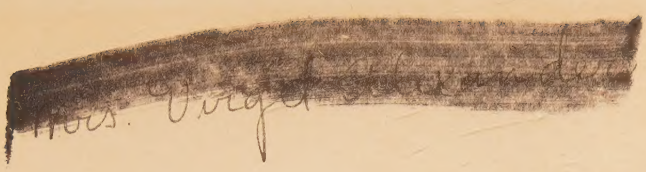

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